

# GEORGIA YOUTH ASSESSMENT: A REPORT

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The purposes of this Assessment is to identify the current state of youth in Georgia including their attitudes and values, to determine whether reform ideas are taking root in this sector of the population, and to identify what youth see as their major challenges. It also reviews the Mission's Strategic Objectives with the aim of suggesting further ways to target youth in order to address some of their concerns, issues and attitudes, as well as looking at specific issues such as gender and ethnicity. Finally, the Assessment also provides an inventory of past and planned activities by other donors, as well as a discussion of what programs have been successful and other "lessons learned."

The Georgia Country Strategy for FY 1999-2003 already based most of its programs in a community setting, and included local government and NGO development, agribusiness activity, electrical distribution and community development. The new Strategy will further coordinate these efforts on a local level in order to have a greater impact on the "values, attitudes and mindset" of the Georgian people, with an emphasis on youth, while still supporting "the more traditional objectives of social transformation, economic growth, and democratic pluralism."

The Mission feels that the continued strengthening of local institutions cannot help but better the lives of Georgians in the long run. Hopefully, this assessment will help to support USAID's activities, based on the presumption that if the recommendations are implemented by USAID and other donors, more of the problems and issues of young people will be addressed, which will help to maintain youth's hope in the future during Georgia's difficult transition years.

### **YOUTH'S NUMBER ONE CONCERN: EDUCATION**

During the Assessment, the focus group participants everywhere stressed the low level of their education and the "big gap" between the secondary and the high school programs. The material they need to know (and are not taught) that requires tutoring for entrance exams, they consider to be a source of corruption on one hand, and proof of the non-effectiveness of education reform, on the other hand. Focus groups and interviews also sent a clear message that civic education is having a substantial and positive impact where it is being taught, as is the holding of school elections.

While the World Bank and other organizations, such as Soros, are making progress with reforms in education, the Team has made some recommendations on how USAID may support that progress. First, an effort should be made to publicize the expected outcomes of educational reform, so students and parents can be better informed about their future.

Secondly, the schools in which the model programs in civic education are taking place could be brought into the process of preparing an expanded project to reach more schools. Such a project could then be offered for buy-ins to bi-lateral embassies or international organizations as the exit strategy for the present implementers.

Third, basic business skills and values could be included in future World Bank teacher training programs for schools. Where USAID programs are working, they could include school programs in their area of expertise.

## **YOUTH'S NUMBER TWO CONCERN: EMPLOYMENT**

In spite of the respondents' ages, unemployment is one of the biggest problems concerning youth. This problem is central to their futures. The Team recommends that a core group of Youth Club "graduates" be brought together for training, which be the basis for a local network and eventually a youth job bank.

Other possibilities are to train youth for service and communications businesses, in banking, and in the field of fee collection, technical repair and meter reading for the electric distributors. Another important addition to job creation would be to work with rural women to create groups that could process and market cheese, fruit, and other agricultural products that lend themselves to the start-up of small agro-businesses and food processing. Eventually, on-going businesses would also supply employment for rural youth who tend to leave school earlier than their urban counterparts.

Because it appears to be essential for job creation at this point in Georgia's transition, the Team would like to be able to suggest a plan for not only reviving the system of vocational education in Georgia, but also in taking away some of the stigma with which it is currently burdened. However, further study to detail the present state of vocational education and its facilities at present, and evaluate what would be needed to update the curriculum. The proposed study should also suggest ways to change the image of the sector as a choice for young people as an alternative to a university education.

## **OTHER PROBLEMS RELATED TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT**

Financial problems, the use of free time, corruption, access to information, trafficking, HIV/AIDS, IDPs, substance abuse, the disabled and street-children are all concerns are high on the lists of young people throughout Georgia; they are all related to the need for reforms in education and for job creation in order to relieve the poverty that is at the root of the problems.

The Team suggested that while the World Bank is working to promote athletics programs in schools, and many NGOs hold sporting events, more needs to be done to form athletic clubs outside of school. The International Organizations for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts might also be brought to Georgia, which would provide an opportunity for local activities as well as international jamborees.

There are a number of efforts to broaden access to the Internet by UNICEF and Soros. The Team recommends that as the USAID's Youth Clubs are expanded, the implementer should place computers in the new Centers where not just the Club, but also other young people can come and use the Internet, and have access to a web site containing information about youth activities throughout Georgia.

It is recommended that part of the civic education package, or even the proposed economic education suggested in SO 1.3, should be a piece on "the cost of corruption" in the daily lives of

students and their families. This can be linked to corruption's impact on the development of their own economy, both local and national.

Social service NGOs should be encouraged to take on more activities with youth, which many are already doing, but they need help in fund-raising, managing volunteers and in expanding their membership base to include vulnerable social sectors.

The Team recommends that more TV spots be dedicated to the dangers of trafficking, and other avenues of information need to be found for the rural areas, and the schools are the most likely candidate for that role. Working with partners in media, the message about prevention of HIV/AIDS could also be more widely spread throughout the country.

## **ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT**

The discussions on ethnic and religious tolerance were surprising. While there is some discomfort with different "cultural habits," and some sense of exclusion because of language, we found none of the youth were prejudiced against any other religion or ethnic group.

Soros and other donors are putting together films on diversity for young children. The Team found that the Youth Houses and Clubs have media groups which could be enlisted to contribute more on subjects such as "living together," films of joint activities, and local cultural studies targeted to older students.

Elections in schools are also showing dramatic results by giving young people a hands-on experience with voting and introducing them to the idea that they have responsibilities that go along with their rights. Involvement in politics outside the school and later in political parties is more likely to take place if it has already been experienced first hand. The Team recommends adding youth components to all phases of election activities; administration, monitoring, party development and voter education would be advisable.

Almost all youth mentioned that a summer camp experience had solidified training and friendships with many different social groups and nationalities. Both the youth and the adults that work with them, have mentioned the importance of the summer camp experience. Charitable groups from the US and Europe should be encouraged to fund these and support them with volunteers when possible as UMCOR and the YMCA have done in the past. Youth Clubs members can be trained to write proposals to these organizations for their summer activities.

## **YOUTH'S NUMBER FOUR CONCERN: THE FUTURE - SOLVING PROBLEMS AND CHANGING ATTITUDES**

The participants mentioned a great variety of problems that they face in everyday life, but most are not actively trying to solve them. They do not see a role for themselves as participants in the problem solving process. They prefer to wait for someone else to take responsibility for solving their problems. Not having an idea of their role in society, they are also not sure whether they will be able to do anything for their own future. They are not used to acting independently, much of which may be the result of Georgian family structure. The notable exceptions we found had received civic education, or been part of a youth group of some kind. The conclusion could be

drawn here, that the new program to expand the number of youth clubs is an excellent choice of directions for the USAID Mission.

Organizations such as Mercy Corps are expert at going into rural villages to set up health committees, mostly made up of young village women who are given basic health training. They then become part of a core group that works toward the rehabilitation of clinics, schools and other small infrastructure projects, by engaging donors and local governments. This model could be used in Georgia to expand knowledge of health issues while also involving the community in the building and the eventual maintenance of their “own” projects.

In the process of interviewing groups of trainers and “graduates” of the AED Youth Clubs, we found they had been trained in Conflict Mediation and some of them wanted to make this a career. They also had knowledge of trafficking, human rights and HIV/AIDS. Hiring them as trainers for crosscutting programs could exponentially spread information to more people.

## **THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND NGOS**

Both Central and local government, as well as NGOs recognize the challenges, but overall their capacity to address these needs is limited by both their budgets and their lack of experience. All of these players need help strengthening their ability to broaden and deepen the services the population needs. We found that the local Youth Departments were mostly lacking in any sort of training other than their own education, also most of them were very young and just out of the University. Any local government training that takes place should insist on having the Chairpersons of the Youth Department attend the training.

The school psychologists in Rustavi who had already received training from a number of donor efforts, know that neither local authorities nor the Central Government will be able to help them for sometime to come. They, however, are at the center of the student, teacher, parent group, in other words, at the center of local communities. They have good ideas about how to use their few resources for the greatest impact, and would be an ideal group with whom to work in the future.

## **NGOS**

Most of the NGOs that the Team interviewed were following traditional missions; e.g. creating events, competitions and charitable activities. The challenge of creating free-time programs and helping the poor is being met to the best of their abilities, with limited resources - mostly volunteers and a few donor grants. They are all overwhelmed by the enormity of the needs and by their limited capacity to deal with them. It is discouraging, most of them admit, but they say they also try to remind themselves that at least they are doing something.

Training in NGO management, the recruitment of volunteers, developing a broader based membership, and fundraising are all topics that would permit these organizations to better manage themselves before they are able to be either organizationally or financially sustainable. While it is understood that this training is taking place presently, those involved in doing so, need to expand their efforts, perhaps by creating a core of full-time trainers that can move around the country in the regional cities.

The programs supporting student government and civic education in schools have formed a core of activist students on whom many of the NGO leaders depend to implement the organizations' activities. These students are either working for or managing NGOs that are reaching out to the most needy in their communities. There are not nearly enough of these young people to meet the overwhelming need. Continued training at this juncture is essential to expand the outreach of all ongoing programs.

## **OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS ON INTEGRATING YOUTH INTO USAID'S STRATEGY**

In working with the idea of integrating youth in the Mission Strategy, we suggest that there are two important categories into which the activities should fall: those activities that affect youth, and those that actually involve youth in the activity itself. Each SO should adopt at least one activity that actually involves the young people in the program or project, as Urban Institute has in using youth in community mobilization, and IFES in civic education.

Each SO is working already on improving the conditions in Georgia, but could also focus on how that is actually improving the lives of youth. In some cases this will mean coordination with Soros, the World Bank and others who are helping reform the education system. In other cases it will simply involve reminding USAID's partners that their work plans need some focus on youth. It could also be that the partners need to keep in closer touch with branch offices and plan to support them in some way even after their local NGOs have become "sustainable." In the past Missions have been required to do such strategy planning for gender issues, and this Mission has done well to recognize that the time has come to do the same for youth.

After reviewing the Mission's Project Management Plans, the Team suggests that in planning for intermediate results, less emphasis could be put on measuring program impact using quantitative measures, and more on qualitative measures that actually show impact.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Finally, the Team would like to thank the USAID staff that provided the opportunity to get to know so many interesting people in the Republic of Georgia, and for their support during the field work on this Assessment. We would also like to thank all the young people who generously offered to share their thoughts and feelings with the Team, and the many people who took the time to talk with us about youth issues and programs. The Team wishes to thank all our hosts around the country who gave us not just room and board, but also warm hospitality and friendship. We learned so much from you, and hope that our efforts will help you in some way.

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# GEORGIA YOUTH ASSESSMENT

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The idea that a country's youth is its future is widely agreed upon everywhere. The difficulties lie in the present for that youth, where adults may not agree on how to give young people the best possible future, or may not have the power to assure it. Decision makers are unlikely to have much contact with the daily lives of children other than their own, so they do not always know the obstacles they face. Those in governing positions are also most likely to respond to immediate pressures from those who can find a voice in the office of the policy maker in charge. Children and youth are among the least able to advocate for themselves.

One of the purposes of this Assessment then, is to listen to the children and youth themselves, which the Team has done in seven raions of Georgia. We have used focus groups to hear what the youth and children think, and in depth interviews with those who are in charge of the organizations that work with them, and the government institutions meant to serve them.

## **II. ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY**

### **A. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT**

As stated in the scope of work (attached), the purpose of this assessment is to:

- Identify the current state of youth in Georgia including their attitudes and values,
- Determine whether reform ideas are taking root in this sector of the population, and
- Identify what youth see as their major challenges.

The assessment will also:

- Look at government policies and existing infrastructure to support youth
- Gather data on youth employment, formal and non formal education, health, civic education, youth empowerment and inclusion
- Review the Mission's Strategic Objectives with the aim of suggesting further ways to target youth in order to address some of their concerns, issues and attitudes, as well as looking at specific issues such as gender and ethnicity
- Provide an inventory of past and planned activities by other donors, as well as a discussion of what programs have been successful and other "lessons learned."

### **B. METHODOLOGY AND RESOURCES**

#### ***1. Focus Groups***

While it would be desirable to undertake survey research among a significant sample of Georgian youth in order to ascertain their attitudes and values, neither the time nor the budget permitted such an effort. We have necessarily relied on a rapid response method, using focus groups of youth and in depth interviews with municipal officials, local NGO leaders, and others

who are involved in youth activities. Travel restrictions also made it necessary to interview some groups and organizations in places other than their base of operations. Time constraints have also limited some of our research to literature review, interviews with informed respondents and only, as possible, site visits. However, we have carried out on-site assessment activities in a limited number of regions in western, eastern and southern Georgia.

The team visited Kutaisi and Tskaltubo in the Imereti Region, Batumi in Adjara, Zugdidi in Samegrelo, Telavi in Kakheti, Gori in Shida Kartli, Rustavi in Kvemo Kartli, and Tbilisi where we carried out both focus groups and in-depth interviews.

In all, we held 8 focus group discussions with an average of 10 to 12 participants per city. The groups were made up of 14 to 18 year olds, and included upper school attendees, as well as children who had left school after finishing primary education. During our initial interviews with USAID Mission personnel, it was suggested that the Team focus on the 14 to 18 year old group as these had finished lower school and were either in high school and planning for university or looking for employment. We also ended up having a few university students and others a little older who were either employed or unemployed. Thus, overall we had a good cross-section of young people. Where they were available, we included Youth House and Youth Club members, rural youth, those who were employed, and others who were unemployed. We also tried to include a balance of males and females in each group, as well as participants who had experience in some donor activity along with others who had had no experience at all. Each session lasted an average of 1.5 hours. The questionnaire format used for the focus groups is included along with a transcription of the recorded sessions and an abridged translation of those sessions. We also include tables for each city that summarize the main concerns of the focus groups and describe the composition of each group. (See Annexes D and E.)

## **2.     *Interviews***

In depth interviews were conducted with 6 municipal officials, especially those in charge of the youth department, 16 with the local NGOs (not including the interviews we carried out with UMCOR Youth Houses and AED Youth Clubs), and well as representatives of international organizations. Each interview lasted approximately an hour. Each one was asked the following questions:

- What are the existing activities for youth?
- Are you informed about what (other) NGOs or international organizations are doing to help youth?
- What do you consider to be the most pressing problems for youth?
- What do you consider to be successful programs for youth and why, and do you know of examples of programs that have not worked well?
- What future programs are most necessary to help youth locally and nationally?

## **3.     *Document Examination***

(See Annex A.)

### **III. BACKGROUND FOR GEORGIA YOUTH ASSESSMENT**

#### **A. COUNTRY SITUATION**

Georgia has been through a series of changes since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in the the 1990s, all of which have affected its youth. Struggles to develop a market economy and democratic governance have both helped and frustrated Georgian youth. The quality of education and equal access to it, as well as its relevance to skills in demand on the job market are problematic. Tensions between social and ethnic groups further cloud youth's expectations of a positive future, while living conditions, most notably in the health and energy sectors make the present all the more difficult, and result in a young population at risk. While some of the pressure on youth is temporarily mitigated by migration to the cities from the countryside, or emigration abroad, in the longer-term, the present optimism we encountered among youth since the Rose Revolution, cannot be sustained, unless some very basic changes are instituted.

#### **B. GOVERNANCE AND THE ECONOMY**

While Georgia's peaceful transition in November of 2003 to an interim government, legitimized by a Presidential election in January of 2004 and a Parliamentary round in March, was encouraging, these events also raised expectations for a faster pace for reform and better living conditions in the near future. Reform of the education and health systems, and a rise in the number of job opportunities at home, were among the hopes we heard voiced by youth frequently during the Assessment, and they were looking to the new government for these changes.

At the same time, the infrastructure needed for investment, especially in the power sector, which is, at best, functioning poorly is not forthcoming. For youth, erratic power makes studying difficult, and limits access to information, whether on the Internet, or through TV and radio. Lack of regular power also limits employment or entrepreneurial opportunities for youth whether in services that depend on communications, or in small stores that require refrigeration and light.

Corruption and familial relationships remain "the way to get things done" in both business and government. Youth are impacted in education and in health services, as well as in their employment possibilities. All the youth we interviewed for the Assessment were aware of the "need" to pay their way through exams, to get to the university, to get health care, and also "to have a protector" to get a job.

Territorial tensions are just one more deterrent to foreign investment. While Adjara has rejoined the fold, tensions with Abkhazia and "so called" South Ossetia continue to grow, while the displaced persons from those regions remain in less than standard living conditions and strain already over burdened social services. Especially the health and education sectors continue to suffer a general decline. It is estimated that at least 61% of all Georgians live below the poverty line. The majority of the young people we interviewed were aware that many of their companions were unable to go to school because of the financial problems of their families. "School means you need clothes and books, and you need to pay tutors if you want to pass exams." Young people suffer because their parents are unemployed and they live on or below the poverty line, but many of the internally displaced people (IDPs) live in even deeper poverty.

Added to the stress of poverty, we found many children who were also worried about the possibility of renewed conflict.

While tax reform may be in sight as of this Assessment, and efforts are being made in education, and economic gains may come from the construction of the Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan pipeline, the prospects for sustained growth remain uncertain for Georgia. It can only be hoped that in the meantime, the new leadership will continue to push forward an agenda of reforms that will encourage Georgians, *especially their young people*, to stay the course.

### **C. EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

As USAID/Caucasus March 2003 Evaluation on Primary and Secondary Education in Georgia states, “Schools remain probably the most important agent for change for modifying values and attitudes, often characterized in Georgia as a potent mixture of entitlement, resignation and rent-seeking.” It also recognizes that “nearly all the nation’s problems are reflected in the demands placed upon the nation’s schools.”

While reform may have decentralized the financing of education, all other functions remain with the Central Government Ministry. There is little evidence that reform has done anything to stave off the deterioration of either school buildings, or what is going on inside them. Changes have come about mostly due to donor assistance, and that is thinly spread around the country. Access to secondary education for students from an increasing number of poor families adds to the growing number of “street children.” Students that continue to secondary education and university are not being prepared for a job market, and have little motivation to study hard with few employment possibilities in their future.

The Team found that in each of the regions visited, there was great enthusiasm for civic education, regardless of the donor that had initiated the program for schools. However, we refer again to the Evaluation on Primary and Secondary Education of March 2003, which goes into some detail on civic education efforts (Foot note page 22.) Much more research needs to be done on this subject alone to understand whether or not the impact is as significant in changing attitudes and behavior for the longer term as it is credited with doing.

The Team also found an almost mystical belief that training in computers and English language would lead to a good job. What is significant about both civic education as well as computer and language training, is that they are mostly going on outside school hours, and outside the schools altogether. While the schools offer youth basic literacy, old teaching methods are still the norm, and the once important figure of the teacher and the prestige of learning, are becoming increasingly discredited.

### **D. EMPLOYMENT**

The subject of unemployment is dealt with extensively elsewhere, and this assessment need not repeat what has been so well examined in UNDP reports among others. From the perspective of youth, however, one aspect of this issue is particularly relevant – the desire to emigrate, or to at least go abroad for work or study.

The post-Soviet generations are growing up with the idea that they are free to travel. During the early 90's, Georgia suffered from a number of conflicts that resulted in the arrival of displaced persons, and which brought about considerable suffering to the population as a whole. From 1993 to 1997, many Georgians left to look for jobs and homes in other countries. There are no reliable statistics, but the State Department for Statistics estimates that between 1990 and 1998, almost 300,000 Georgians left; others put the number at over a million and a half. (Foot note Hardship Abroad or Hunger at Home, IOM publication September 2001, p. 8)

There are no reliable estimations of the numbers emigrating now, but given the economic conditions, and the prospects for future employment, many youth wish to go abroad, either temporarily or permanently. IOM's study concludes that along with the regular migration out of Georgia, there is also considerable irregular emigration as well as trafficking in persons. The study also suggests that the majority of the outflow is among youth and young adults, and represents a large number of youth who are "voting with their feet" about their future in Georgia.

## **E. HEALTH**

The major issues for youth health revolve around reproductive issues and "life style." UNFPA's Study of Adolescent Reproductive Health gives a demographic picture. In 2002, youth between the ages of 15 to 19 made up 7.8% of Georgia population. In 2001, 12% of all children born that year had mothers between the ages of 15 and 19. About 62.3% were born to mothers under the age of 20 whose marriages were not registered. Calculations in the same year show that 5.5% of all males and 18.3% of all females marry by the age of 20.

While health care statistics state that girls between 15 and 19 have 5.6 abortions per 1000, other studies suggest the real figure is closer to 30 per 1000. Awareness of contraception methods is low for girls between the ages of 15 to 24 and even lower in the 15 to 19 year old group. Most deny using any form of contraception at all. About 88% of youth, more so in urban areas than in villages, know about the existence of STDs and AIDs. Knowledge of symptoms and prevention methods is low in all youth groups.

The UNFPA survey claims that about 23.9% of teenagers use some form of drugs, though the figure may be much larger, and 20% of adolescents feel drug use is a matter of course. Drug use is rising in some rural areas (Gori is one example) where the border is porous and smugglers have easy transit and a ready market. The abuse of alcohol is common in both rural and urban areas, but figures are not available. Anecdotal evidence suggests that with no electric in rural areas, all the youth have to do is "get together by candle light, drink and tell stories." One parish priest told us that teenagers who were abused by alcoholic parents, mostly among the chronically unemployed, were increasingly common, and a growing source of street-children who leave home because of that abuse.

Causes of teenage death are largely due to respiratory diseases and automobile accidents. There is also a high incidence of disorders of the endocrine system, the digestive tract and metabolism. Life expectancy for boys at age 15 is 55.3 years, and for girls 61.6 years.

This is a grim picture, and one that is not improved by health and sex education in the schools or by easy access to the health system. Most all the people the Team interviewed who work with

youth also noted that the lack of support for sports in or out of school, is leading to all sorts of skeletal and muscular health problems among adolescents.

## **F. CIVIL SOCIETY**

A USAID Civil Society Assessment done in June of 2001, concludes that “civil society development in Georgia will be a long-term endeavor requiring sustained support for civic institutions well beyond 2002.” This is still true in 2004. As in many other former Soviet and socialist countries, the economic system, the tax and legal structures, are not yet developed to the point where NGOs or CSOs can be financially sustainable. From the Team’s interviews with many Georgians in a range of civil society organizations, they are also not yet organizationally developed much beyond the initial stage requiring strong leadership. In other words, even active NGOs, still tend to work with vertical rather than horizontal relationships within the organizations, and few have broad-based memberships.

While Georgian civil society is most likely to be the means through which society can pressure government for needed reforms, this capacity is still mostly located in Tbilisi. In the regions the Team visited, we found enthusiastic organizations, especially among the youth, and enormous energy among their leaders. Most of them, however, agreed that few citizens know their rights and responsibilities or what to do if they are infringed upon. Citizens are apathetic about corruption and have little faith in the legal system, an atmosphere that is not conducive to implementing reform. More will be said on this later in the Assessment with specific examples from the Team’s interviews.

## **IV. THE CURRENT STATE OF GEORGIAN YOUTH**

### **A. THE HOUSEHOLD**

What differentiates youth from other sectors of the population is their dependence on the adults whose responsibility it is to raise them; their parents or guardians, teachers, health workers, and many more. However, in Georgia, the term “family” traditionally implies more than a nuclear unit. Usually two or three generations live together, and the attitude of parents and grandparents to children tends not to change no matter how old the “child.” The eldest member of the family is considered the leader or the head of the family. So, children are not just financially dependent, but tied to their elders psychologically as well. On the other hand, parents tend to feel obligated to make the children’s lives easier, and attempt to keep this social function, even if they are unemployed. This interrelatedness is maintained after the “child” is married and even when s/he has their own family, and an important decision is rarely made without consulting the parents or grandparents. Symbolically, part of the marriage ceremony includes the “nishnoba” where the parents make the final decision that the couple should be wed. While such generational relationships have the advantage of preserving the continuity of tradition, they also limit the choices of youth where big steps are not taken without family approval, and diminish their motivation when their future is dependent on their parents and not just on their own efforts.

To help illustrate the state of youth today, we have extracted from the 2002 Household Survey and the UNDP Human Development Report to show a sort of “average” situation in which youth live, as a setting for our survey results.

Overall unemployment has increased since 1996, and while some of the rise is due to pensioners who have ceased to be active, the largest employer, the State, also cut back the number of its employees between 1996 and 2002. While a greater percent of urban income is derived from salaries and wages, the higher rates of economic activity in rural areas are due to farming, or at least raising, and perhaps selling some household produce (mostly subsistence.) Households depend now, more on vulnerable remittances than on unsustainable borrowing.

According to the UNDP Human Development Report of 2002, there are now four poverty lines for Georgia: the official poverty line is 114.5 GEL per month, the revised poverty line of 74.3 GEL per month, the World Bank recommended poverty line of 55.0 GEL, and the Government of Georgia's alternative minimum of 52.0 GEL per month. These sums are based on the cost of food and non-food items such as healthcare, electricity, gas, and education. Seen in this light, the gap between incomes of those under and over the poverty line (described by the UNDP as extreme poverty, intermediate poverty and just at the poverty line) has increased regardless of rural or urban setting with the average monthly household income for the poorest being 28 GEL, and 578 GEL for others in urban settings, while the gap is between 24 GEL and 663 GEL in rural areas. The UNDP Report concludes that 25% of the population is probably eating less than needed to maintain health and energy, while 10% are really hungry and in a desperate situation. Among the latter that are most vulnerable, are pensioners, pensioners who have children living with them, and single parents with children. Looking at the depth of poverty generally, there is little difference between rural and urban households. (Footnote Household Survey pages ix and x)

Small business is the source of some income, with small trade being mostly a part of some urban households, and agricultural business usually located in rural areas, but even these business figures appear to be on the decline between 2000 and 2002 at least in the regions of Guria, Samegrelo and Imereti.

While food security is not surprisingly more a worry in urban areas than in rural zones, a slightly higher percentage of urban households were actually more food secure, due to higher salaries and wages in the cities. However, this measure does not take into account that the sources of household income varies in its vulnerability. Dependence on remittances from abroad makes a household more vulnerable than one with a regular salary coming in each month, small though it may be.

Health problems that require a trip to the doctor apply particularly to the very old and to the youngest members of the household. Urban areas have more access to health care facilities than the rural households, and an average of 7 to 10% of household income is spent on the services of healthcare workers (not necessarily doctors) and pharmacies. Many, however, are too poor to seek medical care, and access to medical services continues to be a problem for the all of the poorest households, but is even more problematic in rural than in urban areas. Widespread corruption in the health sector only compounds the inequities of service.

Another important area of concern is the number of hours of electric service provided during a 24 hour period. Urban areas average 11.38, while rural zones 7.77, others like one of the peripheral zones of Zugdidi, as few as three. Water quality is only beginning to be an issue, as are refuse collection and sewage. Wood and kerosene are still the main fuels for heating and cooking in Georgia, in all except urban areas where propane is predominant. In the household survey,

respondents were asked who should have responsibility for natural resources, and most, regardless of whether they were rural or urban residents, answered that the primary responsibility was the State's. While the answer in this case came from the head of the household being surveyed, we saw the same value echoed by the youth in more than one instance.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the results of the household survey on the subjective quality of life, even though it took place before the Rose Revolution. Most households were dissatisfied with the situation of the country, their income and their employment status, and therefore, dissatisfied with their lives. However, most were pleased with their families no matter how poor they were, and most with where they live, and at least not dissatisfied with their state of health. Needless to say, households that were food insecure or living with severe hunger, were significantly more dissatisfied with their lives as a whole. With the exception of Adjara, all three southern most regions Guria, Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, were the most vulnerable over all in terms of economy issues, food security, the environment and social isolation.

While dissatisfaction in the society as a whole may not be high, those in the poverty category, possibly 60% or more of the population, present a risk to stability, especially if a large number of them are people other than ethnic Georgians. The renewal of expectations in the entire population about the future after the Rose Revolution makes that risk all the more potent.

## **B. SURVEY RESULTS: MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS**

### ***1. Education***

- ▶ "At present 99% of children are being prepared by private teachers in order to pass the entrance exams for high schools."
- ▶ "Today knowledge of the English language and computer is required to get a job, but you cannot study them properly at school. Most of schools are not able to teach computer at all due to the absence of computers and people who know how to use them."
- ▶ "The amount of salary one earns varies greatly and depends on where you graduated. A foreign diploma is the most valued in Georgia."
- ▶ "Due to low salaries, school teachers and lecturers at high schools are not motivated to give appropriate knowledge to their students. They often miss lessons and overall, the teaching process has been destroyed and discredited."
- ▶ "Secondary school doesn't give us enough knowledge to pass the entrance exams. We have no chance to enter high school without additional support from a private teacher."
- ▶ "The Secondary school program absolutely differs from the program required for the entrance exams to high schools, so private lessons are a necessity."
- ▶ "You can not find a job if you don't know English and computer, but schools pay no attention to this reality."

- ▶ “The education reform processes are completely unclear for me, and what will be the final decision and outcome. There is a complete lack of information about it and we are confused.”

## **Finding**

The FGD participants everywhere stressed the low level of their education and the “big gap” between the secondary and the high school programs. The material they need to know (and are not taught) that is required for entrance exams, they consider to be the source of corruption on one hand, and proof of the non-effectiveness of education reform, on the other hand. Many of the teachers seem to be adding to their salaries by extra-curricular teaching. The students also notice that there are many old teachers who do not wish to retire, because they will not be able to live on their pensions. Here and there we found several students say they “had heard” that things were improving with exams, but as yet they saw no changes.

## **2. Youth Activities and Use of Free Time**

- ▶ “If you want to use your spare time fruitfully, you should have money.” (Tbilisi)
- ▶ "There is no place here where a young person could productively and reasonably spend spare time." (Regions)
- ▶ "There is no cinema in my town or other places of entertainment." (Regions)
- ▶ "If you have money, you may find places for good entertainment in Tbilisi. Those who do not have money are idle in the streets. Even the cinema is an expensive pleasure for most of us."
- ▶ "When children are in the streets, they are under numerous risks and they may have serious trouble."

## **Finding**

Due to an overloaded program (too many subjects, or too little time allotted to the important subjects), the problem with free time is that there was not enough of it for those “who study well in secondary school.” This was true for the youth who were still motivated to study. In general though, free time activities are either unavailable or unaffordable.

## **3. Access to Information**

- ▶ “I think the youth of the region are in an informational vacuum. They have no idea about existing exchange programs and are unable to be involved in such activities. It would be better to make such programs easily accessible for regions and not only in the capital city.”
- ▶ "Applications for youth activities organized by different NGOs and other organizations are distributed in secondary and high schools, but the point is that nobody reads them. I think it would be better if the representatives of those organizations came and talked to children face-to-face. This would be a better way of disseminating information."

## **Finding**

There is a general lack of information about youth activities taking place in their towns. The majority of the interviewees had no idea about existing organizations working on youth problems. Only exchange programs were mentioned among youth activities. Internet cafes, cinema and theatre (or the lack of them) are considered the main places for out-of-school entertainment. This generation relies on the TV for information, and the Internet, if it is available. Very few mentioned reading newspapers or magazines, as they are expensive.

### **4. *Unemployment/Employment***

- ▶ “The main problem currently is total unemployment.”
- ▶ “Due to total unemployment in Georgia, most of the young people leave for foreign countries in search of work. The percent of migration is very high.”
- ▶ “We all fear the future. I am not sure that the problem of unemployment will be solved any time soon.”
- ▶ “There are a lot of unemployed young people in Georgia. Many professionals are left without a job.”
- ▶ “In most cases, people can not find a job in their specialty. Vacancies are available only for several professions, e.g. Law, Bank, etc.”
- ▶ “A person, who does not know foreign languages and computer, may find only a low paying job in Georgia, if s/he gets any at all.”
- ▶ “After the “Rose Revolution” education and knowledge became more valuable. The new government pays more attention to the level of professionalism.”
- ▶ “Those who have received education abroad even for a year, have a better chance to get a job than a person who graduated in Georgia.”
- ▶ To find a job, you need a protector and money.”
- ▶ “I think professionalism has only become of value recently.”

## **Finding**

In spite of the respondents’ ages, unemployment is one of the biggest problems concerning youth. This problem is central to their futures, which is why it was also frequently mentioned during discussion of other topics. Most of them feel that knowledge of computers and a foreign language, mostly English, will be enough to get them a good job. This job, however, will not be available to them unless they have a “protector” (know someone in the field) and money, as many positions must be paid for. The highest amount we heard was \$4000 to work in a bank. There is some hope among most of them that merit and competence will be more important in the future. We also found that while many want to go abroad for employment, this is more because of need. Most of them would like to be able to stay in Georgia to work.

## **5. *Financial problems***

- ▶ "The main problem is financial. There are many children around me who suffer from severe financial shortage."
- ▶ "Unemployed parents often are not able to pay for textbooks, clothes, and other necessary school materials."
- ▶ "Nobody can pass entrance exams (for high school) without additional study with private teachers. This requires finances that are not available for the majority, especially in rural areas."

### **Finding**

Financial problems are important particularly because without money, access to education, to jobs, to medicine, to entertainment is not possible. Many children talked about their "friends" who had these problems, but in many cases we could see they were talking about themselves as well as about neighbors. For many, financial insecurity also made them feel socially inferior. Getting an education comes close to being a moral responsibility for many children. Without a diploma, many of them said, they were nothing. Also important, was that there was practically no discussion of vocations that did not require an education. Only in Kutaisi did one young man mention the need for workers, and that everyone could not sit in an office. Going to a technical or vocational school, we were told, implies you have failed.

## **6. *Corruption***

- ▶ "We encounter corruption almost everywhere."
- ▶ "I know many people, who solve their problems by means of money."
- ▶ "Children "are forced" to take private lessons from those teachers who teach them at school. As a result, they pay more attention to "their" children. Isn't it corruption?"
- ▶ "I think a big source of corruption is that even those pupils, who have academic excellence at secondary schools, are forced to go to the private teachers. The school program and the entrance exam requirements are completely different."
- ▶ "We encounter corruption everywhere. One has no chance to get a job without money."
- ▶ "We can observe some positive trends after the new government has been appointed. The level of corruption in the country is decreasing step by step."

### **Finding**

The children have drawn the conclusion for us here. They encounter corruption at every turn, and while they accept it as part of their lives, the acceptance is reluctant. What stood out in all the discussions, whether it was about education, employment, health, or entertainment, is that they are offended by corruption and are keenly aware of its unfairness. Youth are a group that wants to change the situation if they can be empowered to do so.

## **7. *Trafficking***

- ▶ “Yes, I have heard about it from TV and I also know examples. People are offered jobs abroad and it turns out to be a lie.”
- ▶ “I learned about it from TV. You should not give your passport to anyone.”
- ▶ “I have neighbors who paid \$4000 to go to the Czech Republic. They were put in a prison camp. The mother became ill and the son had to work for nothing.”
- ▶ “A woman went abroad through some program and has been lost. Her family is still searching for her.”
- ▶ “I know about it from TV.”
- ▶ “My cousin works in Italy and said the Georgians who come there have been tricked, and the good jobs are not real. She asked us to tell everyone.”

## **Finding**

In the cities, most of the participants knew about trafficking, and a surprising number told of harrowing experiences of illegal migrants. Few of the children from the rural areas knew about trafficking, probably due to the lack of power for TV reception, which seems to be the source of the most of the available information on this topic. Other avenues of information need to be found for the rural areas, and the schools are the most likely candidate for that role.

## **8. *Conflicts and Protest***

- ▶ “There is no alternative to dialog.”
- ▶ “We need to arrange meetings and have informational exchanges to resolve conflicts.”
- ▶ “Protest is an extreme measure.”
- ▶ “We are close to the conflict zone (Gori) and we want to communicate with Ossetian youth. We had written a project for a closer relationship, but the government put it on the shelf, but we still want to work on joint organizations.”
- ▶ “I have good a relationship with my Ossetian neighbors.”
- ▶ “Dialog and diplomacy are the best ways to resolve conflicts.”
- ▶ “Dialog is more acceptable, but protest is more effective.”
- ▶ “Peaceful mediation is the best way to resolve conflicts.”
- ▶ “Dialog is good if it can be peaceful, but if the other side does not give you a chance, then protest.”

- ▶ “During the recent political process, all of us were involved, some by choice and some by force. (Adjara)”

## **Finding**

While students often accuse each other of being passive, when it comes to conflict, they are all for diplomacy and mediation. However, while they think getting together and discussing matters is the best way to solve problems, most were not afraid to suggest protest as a means of being heard. At least one in every group was ready to protest first and talk later. The overall feeling was that, while discussion is most acceptable, protest is a more effective means of being heard.

In the process of interviewing groups of trainers and “graduates” of the AED Youth Clubs, we asked them what they thought the most important issues were in their lives. All of them said that Conflict Mediation was at the top of their list, and some of them wanted to make this a career. Of next importance for them were trafficking, human rights and HIV/AIDS. They also see drugs and alcohol as problems that are symptomatic of unemployment and of the lack of extra-curricular activity for youth, and lack of access to education. Many of these IDPs are homeless or living under extremely crowded conditions in camps.

## **9. *Ethnic and Religious Minorities***

- ▶ “There is a language barriers with Azeris. They live here but do not know the language.”
- ▶ “We all have Chechen friends (Telavi) and classmates. It’s hard to make friends because we all have different habits.”
- ▶ “I am good friends with my Ossetian neighbors, but it is insulting that Jehova’s Witnesses try to convert us away from Christianity.(Gori)”
- ▶ “There are many Jehovah’s Witnesses in my village, maybe because there was no church there before.”
- ▶ “Armenians and Azeris have been so well established in Georgia that they feel free to discriminate among the local population. In some places they don’t let the Georgians live there.”
- ▶ “Due to the recent tensions with Russia, a feeling of distaste has appeared among Georgian children and we are reluctant to communicate with them.”
- ▶ “Racism does not fit the Georgian character.”
- ▶ “Aggressiveness towards Moslems comes from Tbilisi. We have no problems with them. (Adjara)”
- ▶ “We Georgians were among the first Christian nations and now the Jehovah’s Witnesses are in the streets and parks pressing everyone to accept their religion. I cannot accept them.”

- ▶ “In the most backward areas of Georgia there are 70% Jehovah’s Witnesses. They are helping the most vulnerable people and then obliging to accept their beliefs.
- ▶ “Lack of education is the main reason people mock others. Only illiterate people behave this way (toward other religions.)”

## **Finding**

The discussions on ethnic and religious tolerance were surprising. While there is some discomfort with different “cultural habits,” and some sense of exclusion because of language, we found none of the youth were prejudiced against any other religion or ethnic group – except for the Jehovah’s Witnesses. The sense that the Witnesses were obligating vulnerable people to believe as they do upset them. We also found that while many were disgusted with the drugs and alcohol used by street children, there was a strong desire to help them “return to a normal life.” (See below.) It was also the case that they want to include the IDPs in their daily life. Even the poorer students have a sense of wanting to contribute and help, an amazing generosity in the face of their own difficulties.

### **10. *Street Children***

- ▶ "I think Georgia has one very big and growing problem – street children. I think the entire community should be actively involved in resolving this problem. People should do their best to return them to a normal life.”
- ▶ “Street children should be involved in ordinary school life and in out-of-school activities to keep them from becoming criminals.”
- ▶ “Street children frequently rob cell-phones. At an early age they start smoking and using drugs. The Government does not pay any attention to this problem.”
- ▶ “Many of the street children here (Zugdidi) are also IDPs. It would be better if we all had joint activities and meetings.”

### **11. *Substance Abuse***

- ▶ “Drugs, cigarettes and alcohol have become one more important problem for us.”
- ▶ “There are many drug users among the young and even more among teenagers.”

## **Finding**

Both the problems of “street children” and IDPs concern the young people deeply. There is a sense that “there but for a couple of GEL, I can see myself.” The concern is genuine for people they live and go to school with, but the problem is so pervasive that it adds to their own fear of the present and of the future. This fear is heightened for many young people who live in families where substance abuse is common, given the level of unemployment. As one priest who works with street children told us, “It is a part of Georgian culture to drink, but in the past we drank while we ate, and what we drank was good quality. Now people don’t eat when they drink, and they drink a lot of bad homemade stuff. This causes a lot of domestic violence that I hear about

in confession. If we can't get the parents back to work, at least we must give the children a way to live in the now and for the future." The conclusion returns us again to employment.

## **12. *Expectations for the Future***

- ▶ "I hope that problems will be solved by the time we are grown-ups."
- ▶ "I am sure that problems will be solved, but it needs time."

## **Finding**

The participants mentioned a great variety of problems that they face in everyday life, but they also are not actively trying to solve them. They do not see a role for themselves as participants in the problem solving process. They prefer to wait for someone else to take responsibility and solve their problems. Not having an idea of their role in society, they are also not sure whether they will be able to do anything for their own future. They are not used to acting independently, which results in statements such as: "Nobody cares what my opinion is about anything," or "We are accustomed to the fact that our parents or somebody else solves our problems." Many children do not feel they even have the right to express their own opinions. "Nobody is interested in children's opinions," or "Nobody will take into consideration what I have to say." There were a number of notable exceptions, some of which had received civic education, or been part of a youth group of some kind.

Few of the participants knew about their rights. Only a few expressed interest in learning more about them. Some felt the reason they did not know was because of the lack of understanding about human rights in the society in general. "It makes no difference whether I know my rights or not," said one student, "Somebody will violate them anyway." Others think the information is not needed, because it does not concern them. The term "rights" for most of the participants is associated with criminals who need to be able to defend themselves against policemen.

The lack of understanding of a citizen's rights and responsibilities and few ideas about their role in the society, suggests that the level of civic education among the youth is still extremely minimal. Youth are afraid of their futures, though with the change in government there seems to be a renewal of hope for future.

## **C. FINDINGS FROM OTHER INFORMED OBSERVERS WORKING WITH YOUTH**

### **1. *Government Representatives***

We met with Irakli Nadiradze of the Youth Department in the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport. He told us about the programs he planned. The Conference on Peaceful Youth in the Caucasus, was to include Ossetian, Abkhazian and Georgia Youth. They would use the local government and their NGO contacts to get the word out for participants. He also explained the competitions that would be held for Young People. Winning would bring stipends for study in a number of categories, and there were to be 110 winners between the ages of 7 and 26. He explained that this year there needed to be a lot of training for the Ministry's staff, as many of them were new to government.

“Youth’s problems all stem from our unemployment problem, the idleness and drugs problems follow that one.” Another year, with a bigger budget, he would like to set up a rehabilitation center starting in Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi. UNICEF will be a partner in that program, and perhaps also the EC. World Vision expects to help with a program for the disabled and handicapped. He wishes he had money now to run such a program, but hopes there will be a bigger budget next year. It is also very important to get resources up to the mountain villages. They need everything. Next year he also plans a “healthy life style” campaign against smoking, alcohol and drugs. Finally he told us about the efforts to bring youth into the process of negotiation to eventually join the European Community. He looks forward to having young representatives from the Baltic States come and share the experience of their inclusion into the EC.

In Batumi we met with the Chairperson of the Adjara Trade Union Council, who provides space in her office for “Favoriti,” AED’s Youth Club. They work together and focus on the local social problems. Youth, she said, have no place to go in their free time, either after school or in the summer. “Our places are all filled with IDPs so there is no place to take the children. If they are not in the street now, they are watching TV.” She said they would like to build a youth house in Batumi that could be a center for planning and different programs where they could get entertainment and training outside of school, but the Social Fund that the Trade Union once controlled is no more and she relies on the NGOs for program funds.

We met the Chairperson of the Youth Department in Gori who had only been in her position two weeks, and was just graduated from university. She told us that unemployment was the number one problem, and also that youth had no chance to express themselves and that they were passive. With her small budget, she would like to arrange cultural events, charitable activities and concerts for students, and perhaps a sports competition with prizes, and a day of cleaning for the city. If she had no limits on her budget, she said she would increase the salaries for teachers and health workers, repair clinics, and arrange for poor children to have possibilities for on-line computer learning.

The Deputy of the Local Administration and the Chair of the Youth Department met with us in Tskaltubo. There is virtually no employment for the population which is made up of 50% local residents and 50% IDPs. Youth problems are a priority here. There are only two people on the Youth Department staff, but they manage with volunteers and get help from NGOs. They are trying to promote the more intelligent youth to give them a future, and they hold sport competitions. They created a library where they can also get free legal consultations. They plan holidays for the orphanage. They work with the Youth Club and try to offer more courses in language and computer than the Club can manage, but there is a great need for other subjects such as accounting and business. The Deputy and the Youth Department Chair disagreed about whether it would be better to have these courses in or outside of the school, but they both agreed that training for employment was essential, as was civic education. They had once had an employment fund, but with government reorganization, the funding for it had been cut. In the future they would like to have a drug rehabilitation center and programs to promote a healthy life style. They mentioned that they had organized their program in components and were always on the look out for donors that could fund one or more of their needs.

Telavi’s Youth Department was chaired by a young man who had been a trainer in the IFES Election Program. He thought the main problem of unemployment was due to the low level of

education. “There is little information here,”he said, “because we have so little electric power. Very few people here in town have access to the Internet. It is infinitely worse in the rural areas.” The other big problem is access to education due to family finances and this too is worse in the villages. With his budget, he would like to have free educational and cultural events. He has invited the Young Lawyers and NGOs to collaborate on educational programs. If he could have any programs he wanted, he would like to train the teachers in new inter-active teaching methods, be able to disseminate more information and have more exchange programs so that young people could share information with each other.

The meeting in Rustavi with the Chairperson of the Municipal Youth Department was also attended by the accountant (a woman who remained silent throughout the discussion) and by the Head of the Student Union (see the NGO section.) The Chair said the problems for the 14 to 18 year old group was that they had no entertainment, only cafes, and that most of their parents were unemployed. For the older youth, the main problem was also unemployment, but that now it was their own problem and not just that of their parents. “Our problem of street youth is growing as is our drug problem.” He said that he had started a program for 5 drug dependent children all 12 and 13 years old. Integration is a big problem after they have already been on the street for 6 years. There is an orphan house he would also like to help, but has no means. We need camps and rehabilitation centers, but my budget cannot begin to create those services.

While our focus group was taking place in one room, there was an opportunity to talk to three school psychologists in Rustavi, all of whom worked in the “better” schools in town and all of whom had had special teacher training through Soros and UNESCO. “The problem for all children between the ages of 12 and 20 is that they are not prepared for such a hard social environment.” Self-realization is a great problem, as the children are dependent on their parents and in the school system, it is unlikely that they will have the opportunity to find out who they are and what they can do. “In most cases, we get children asking advice from us because their parents cannot cope.” Alcohol problems in the family lead to the abuse of children in about 5 cases for every 40 students, and that is in the better schools. From the 4 prestige schools in town, about 80% of the children have the opportunity to go on to higher education. In the other 29 schools in Rustavi, only about 10% of the children continue on. If they could have one program they desired, the psychologists said, it would be to create a learning and consultation center in the schools where parents and children can come for meetings and for activities. “Ultimately, the problem of children in the street needs to be solved. There are about 240 or 250 children that are registered homeless in Rustavi alone. As the local education and youth departments do not seem to have any ideas about how to deal with the problem, or even the extent of it, we would like to help. How to do that is another problem.”

## **Finding**

Central Government is aware of the problems of youth, but can address only a few of them for the neediest. They must also work to satisfy the elites who provide their power base. They also hope the local departments will work with NGOs to stretch their small budgets. Even the Central departments appear to be anxious to work with donor programs. This is all the more reason for coordination among donors, and for them to maintain good communication with the Central Governemnt Ministries on a regular basis.

## **Finding**

On the level of local government, the old institutions are virtually bankrupt both in resources and in ideas. They have financial autonomy, but with nothing in the coffers. Actions are still taken using the old Soviet methods and models. They are in charge of youth that are unprepared for the present challenges. It speaks well for them that they know what these challenges are for the most part, but their resources, both monetary and experiential are minimal. A few local authorities know how to work with the local NGOs, but few is the operative word. In other cases it is a fine line between working with and coopting those organizations. This suggests that strong support is needed for the local offices of the NGOs that are based in Tbilisi, and that when the local offices gain a “sustainable status,” they still need regular follow-up support and mentoring from the original program implementors.

## **Finding**

The school psychologists in Rustavi who had already received training from a number of donor efforts, know that neither local authorities nor the Central Government will be able to help them for sometime to come. They, however, are at the center of the student, teacher, parent group, in other words, at the center of local communities. They have good ideas about how to use their few resources for the greatest impact, and are an ideal group with whom to work in the future.

## **2.     *NGOs and Other Organizations***

While we have reported each of the Team’s encounters with the government representatives or employees above, we will summarize our meetings with various NGOs. Besides our meetings with AED Youth Clubs and UMCOR Youth Houses, we also interviewed local representatives of Urban Institute, IFES, YMCA, Young Parliamentarians, Horizonti, Student Unions and others. Each of these organizations has a national mandate and local activities which they are carrying out with direction from a central office in Tbilisi, so we will not repeat here their programmatic tasks. Instead we will report what they see as the local or national problems for youth and how they would help resolve these issues.

We met with Young Parliamentarians in Tskaltubo, Kutaisi and in Tbilisi. In all cases they are working on school elections and getting all their representatives together from throughout Georgia about once a year. We found out from the Tbilisi representative, that they are involved in research on the attitudes and values throughout Georgia, but unfortunately, they did not feel they could share this research with us.

In Tskaltubo, however, the Young Parliamentarians are actively working with the Youth Club of Kutaisi. They have managed to get the support of local business and local government to do a number of charitable programs in the orphanages, to promote intellectual activities among school children, a beauty contest, a disco with prizes for the best dancers, and a series of summer athletic competitions. Self-government in schools is only one of their activities. For the Kutaisi/Tskaltubo group, it is the use of free time that is the biggest problem for youth, and they are active in trying to solve the problem in the region.

In Kutaisi, the Team also met with a group of NGO leaders, all of who were activist women. The organizations were the Initiative Group Project “Education,” the Musician’s Union, Imereti

Youth Union, the International Humanitarian Center, and the Kutaisi Rehabilitation Center. Most had received grants in the past from Soros, UNCOR, the US Embassy, the Danish Refugee Council, various UN agencies and some from the municipality. The Peace Corps had also been helpful in local events. Many had been trained by Soros in the PTA or the debate programs, and by IFES during the elections. All were engaged in civic education, charitable actions, and community mobilization. They all felt the most important things they were doing to help youth were in civic education. The children who had the course, they said, became more active both in their personal lives as well as in actions to help the community. "In some cases they even managed to convince their parents to work with them in community projects such as clean-up days in the city and in the surrounding villages." All agreed that youth need more training to help them learn to promote their own ideas. "Ideally, all the schools in Imereti should have civic education courses, not just the four where it exists now. While the Youth Clubs do good work in language and computer training, there is much more we need to do and civic education is the best start."

In Batumi we met a representative of the YMCA who said the problem for youth is mainly economic. The music hall and the discos are too expensive for most young people, so they are in the streets with nothing to do. The Mayor gives the YMCA their premises rent free, and they cooperate with the Trade Union on summer camps. They have offered to let Favoriti (the AED funded Youth Club) have a computer center in the YMCA office. They will share the training events when they can. "It is especially important to help the IDPs. We have over 6,000 in Adjara and about 3,500 in Batumi alone. We need sports activities for them all, especially the boys and although we prepared a program for camps this year, the YMCA did not fund it. All the NGOs here are working together to solve the problems." It should be noted here that the AED Youth Club and the YMCA all work together with the Trade Union, and are partly dependent on it for space. It was not always clear, whether the Youth Club and the YMCA were doing the programs desired by the Trade Union, or whether it was the other way around.

Two of the Student Unions we met, one in Gori and one in Rustavi illustrate the impact of training on student leaders. The Rustavi leader was concerned with the difficulty of access to higher education for many because "it must be paid for." He also discussed the use of free time and his collaboration with the municipality. "The students need a center for activities where they *can do everything from getting information on exchange programs to playing chess.*" He said he had written a proposal, but did not know of any donors to whom he might submit it.

In Gori, the student leader was a product of an early pilot project of self-governing in the school and he said it had "completely changed his way of thinking." He told us, "The problems are the same everywhere, unemployment, bad habits like alcohol and drugs, illiteracy and nihilism about studying, which all leads to living in the street with no supervision. With unemployment the way it is, most students ask themselves why study?" Their Student Union offers films, and wants to create a real sports program. They have had seminars on HIV/AIDS and try to include rural youth. "The rural problems here are much worse even than in the city. There are absolutely no free time activities, and no transport, but they still have better discipline in the schools and they still have sports activities. The situation around the conflict zone is the worst and that is where the drugs come in, mostly heroin." If he could have any program he wanted, he said he would establish a student discount of 20% for transport, and he would like to cafes to offer student discounts as well. "Our boarding schools are filled with IDPs, so the other students have to live, travel and eat however they can. They all need help." He added more things to his wish

list as well, like a debate program, more science courses and discussed the need to motivate the young teachers and train them in interactive teaching methods.

Given the problems in Gori, we also met with Biliki, an NGO that runs a day care center for children from 7 to 16. The director agreed with the Student Union representative and also said her organization was to be involved in the new program for street children with Save the Children. She said the program was desperately needed and that she was looking forward to being able to serve more vulnerable children.

A group of NGOs gathered to meet us in Telavi, Women in the Universe, Fund of Life, and the Regional Organization of Veterans. When asked what the main problems of youth were, one man told us that from 14 to 18 years old, children had little parental supervision, that they were reluctant to be educated and that they were vulnerable to “deviant behavior.” All this is because “the adults are in a socio-economic crisis and most live under the poverty line and are doing hard physical labor to survive. Only a few of the privileged get out of town to be educated elsewhere.” In their spare time, the children have nothing to do and are frustrated. A number also added that there are no boarding schools any more, and texts books are hard to come by. “In the end, children see that education has no value if even their educated relatives have no jobs, and that the uneducated are running the government.” The children lose interest and trust. It seemed that some of the adults in the group felt the same way.

We were also told that the attitude of the teachers to the children is out of date. “Most of them are old, but are afraid to retire for fear that they would have to live on their pensions, which almost no one can do.” While these NGOs have received resources over time from Soros, Eurasia, UN Volunteers, Mass Media Programs, the World Food Program, the British Embassy and from IFES, the most impact has come from the self-government in schools and from the civic education courses. “It is important for children, for all of us, to know our rights and responsibilities. We see a significant difference in the children who have had the civic education course. They are more active and responsive, more willing to speak for themselves and to help others.”

We met separately with a representative of the Horizonti Foundation in Telavi. He reiterated that the biggest problems for youth were unemployment, education losing its value, and unhealthy life styles, i.e. drugs and alcohol. He told us about the coalition of 10 NGOs working together in the region with Urban Institute on a great variety of projects from local clean-ups to the vaccination of domestic and street dogs. “One of the best projects was our advocacy work with Mercy Corps and CARE. That should continue as well as the civic education we have been doing with IFES. We also need more teacher training to get the old Soviet teaching methods out of our schools.”

A representative of the Union Of Azeri Women came to Tblisi to meet us and told us about the folk dance group that was helping to preserve the Azeri culture among the youth. The NGO has also been involved in a long list of charitable activities distributing humanitarian assistance. However, she felt that the work IFES and NDI had done in civic education was extremely important. GTZ had also helped them set up a branch of the Caucasus Institute for Peace. In 2003, Mercy Corps worked with Azeri, Greek, Georgian, and Armenian village women and helped create a network of activist women that remains active. Most important though, she said, is the Center for Women supported by Soros and the US Embassy. “It is the only place the

women can meet together outside their houses. In our culture women cannot go to cafes or public places, so our center is very important to them. Most are married by the age of 13 or 14 and need support. At best they have finished primary school. Only 5 to 7% go on to high school.” They receive legal counseling, computer and language courses, civic education and there is a library. “We try to have a variety of workshops and seminars.” The municipality will also help them from time to time. “We are proud that we are training trainers in NGO management and human rights.” It is a credit to their training that a number of their “graduates” have found jobs in banking, in pharmacies and other businesses. “However,” she said, “there are 140,000 people in the region and we can only help a few. We desperately need wide spread civic education programs. Youth need to know their rights and responsibilities. We are working with IFES on this and local youth are involved. This program, plus free-time support are needed to restore trust. Deviant behavior is so easy to come by.”

### **Finding**

Most of the NGOs interviewed are following traditional missions; creating events, competitions and charitable activities. The challenge of creating free-time programs and helping the poor is being met to the best of their abilities, with limited resources - mostly volunteers and a few donor grants. They are all overwhelmed by the enormity of the needs and their limited capacity to deal with them. It is discouraging, most of them admit, but they say they also try to remind themselves that at least they are doing something.

### **Finding**

What came out of the meetings is that the programs supporting student government in schools, and civic education have formed a core of activist students on whom many of the NGO leaders depend to implement the organizations’ activities. These students are either working for or managing NGOs that are reaching out to the most needy in their communities. There are just not nearly enough of *these young people to meet the overwhelming need.*

## **V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUTH ACTIVITIES BEYOND THE CURRENT MISSION OBJECTIVES**

### **A. USAID’S ASSUMPTIONS BEHIND THE STRATEGY FOR 2004 TO 2008**

USAID has involved the Government of Georgia in some of its activity planning for the 2004 to 2008 Country Strategy. While USAID’s focus will expand efforts at the local government and community levels, it is hoped that the Government will move ahead with the reforms needed to support “Georgia’s development as a stable, democratic country, increasingly integrated into the global economy.” (Footnote USAID’s E&E Congressional Budget Justification for FY 2005)

The Georgia Country Strategy for FY 1999-2003 already based most of its programs in a community setting. These included local government and NGO development, agribusiness activity, electrical distribution and community development. The new Strategy intends to further coordinate these efforts on a local level in order to have a greater impact on the “values, attitudes and mindset” of the Georgian people, while still supporting “the more traditional objectives of social transformation, economic growth, and democratic pluralism.” (Strategy page 8)

Given the tensions at both local and national levels in Georgia, the Mission also intends to use techniques that “explicitly seek to prevent conflict” across the board in its programs. Any conflict, whether it stems from ethnic, linguistic or religious differences, is seen as a threat to Georgia’s survival as a nation.

The Mission also appears to presume that while it will work with the GoG, the creation of more participatory communities able to advocate for reform, will assure the momentum of the reform agenda. Even if the GoG should lose that momentum at some point, USAID feels that the continued strengthening of local institutions cannot help but better the lives of Georgians in the long run.

## **B. SO 1.31 ACCELERATED DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE TO CREATE JOBS**

Basic business skills and values could be included in future teacher training programs for schools. An understanding of market forces, even on a local level is understandable to young people, but the teaching needs to be done with concrete examples. Where programs are working in agro-business in rural areas, they could include a school program that would illustrate the process of getting vegetables to market and what is required to package and sell them in a larger market. Other possibilities for training youth for service and communications businesses also could be linked with some of the computer and language training being offered by Youth Clubs. Banking is another area where young people could be trained to go straight from high school into banks as tellers.

While many of the Youth Clubs and Houses we visited, are concentrating on computer and language training, these skills are not linked to specific job categories, and leads many young people (in fact, most of those we talked to) to think that they will have a good job after they have mastered the computer and some basic English. While these skills are important, the trainers need to better understand the various job descriptions that their graduates might fill.

There is some random job counseling that takes place through NGOs, but neither parents nor most of the teachers in the school system have previous knowledge of the job market that would be helpful to young graduates. Most of the youth we talked to thought the only way to get a job was to “know someone” or have a mentor, or to pay for the position. Helping to set up realistic job counseling through the Youth Clubs, and eventually developing a Youth Employment Agency would be a way to focus on the real job market and to combat corruption at the same time. A core group of Youth Club “graduates” could be brought together for training, which would include such topics as writing basic job descriptions and resumes, and how to canvass local employers for job openings. Teaching the group how to match employers and skill inventories on a database, as well as interviewing both employers and future employees, would be the basis for a local network. Such an effort would require considerable communication between implementers of the new youth activity and partners working in SO 1.3 projects.

An important addition to job creation would be to work with rural women to create groups that could process and market cheese, fruit, and other agricultural products that lend themselves to the start-up of small agro-businesses and food processing. Micro-loans would be needed, but these require only basic business skills. The women are often left behind in rural areas to make a living while the men are working abroad or in the larger cities. While this is not an exclusively

youth program, many of the women are young, but children would be better off with mothers who have income from such a project. Eventually, on-going businesses would also supply employment for rural youth who tend to leave school earlier than their urban counterparts.

Because it appears to be essential for job creation at this point in Georgia's course, the Team would like to be able to suggest a plan for not only reviving the system of vocational education in Georgia, but also in taking away some of the stigma with which it is currently burdened. However, the time allowed to study the problem was not sufficient during this Assessment to make programmatic suggestions. We do recommend that the Mission, perhaps in conjunction with the World Bank, which is working with the problem on a policy level, draft a study to detail the present state of vocational education and its facilities at present, and evaluate what would be needed to update the curriculum. The study should also suggest ways to change the image of the sector as a choice for young people as an alternative to a university education.

### **C. SO 1.51 A FOUNDATION FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENERGY SYSTEM**

The Mission intends to mobilize young people on energy and conservation issues with the hope that they will influence the attitudes of their parents, and also recognizes that the solution to the energy problems will come partly from the consumers themselves. While young people may not want to consider a career as meter police, employment in the field of collection and meter reading should be considered as part of the energy program. Using local community mobilization techniques, there are opportunities to combat corruption locally, and to maintain local systems, as well as providing a number of employment opportunities for meter readers and technicians.

It came to our attention during our fieldwork that in many communities, the East-West Caspian pipeline is not creating jobs along the route. BP could use examples from other community development projects. See the section below on Health and Social Services where several projects are described that were successfully implemented in post-conflict Kosovo. It was shown there that doing infrastructure projects without the community's involvement and "ownership" was less successful than the longer, but more lasting development that came out of projects done with community participation.

### **D. SO 2.31 MORE EFFECTIVE, RESPONSIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

There is a clear message from our focus groups and interviews that civic education is having a substantial and positive impact where it is being taught. Elections in schools are also showing dramatic results by giving young people a hands-on experience with voting and introducing them to the idea that they have responsibilities that go along with their rights. Involvement in politics outside the school and later in political parties is more likely to take place if it has already been experienced first hand. Expanding the idea of "the culture of lawfulness" can be part of the same core curricula (or extra-curricular) activity. The implementers of civic education could "package" their current programs and provide projects for other donor buy-ins as an exit strategy.

While we found many NGOs in Georgia during our fieldwork, almost all of them need help to develop their own organizations. Many of them may not survive the departure or even the

cutback of donor funding, which is part of an attrition that should be expected. However, others are doing important work in their communities, but need the ability to remain independent from local government if they are to help provide social services. Having the Youth Club in Batumi, for instance, dependent on the Trade Union, may not always allow the Youth Club to pursue its own mission if it is required to do some of the Trade Union's job. Training in NGO management, the recruitment of volunteers, developing a broader based membership, and fundraising are all topics that would permit these organizations to better manage themselves before they are able to be either organizationally or financially sustainable. While it is understood that this training is taking place presently, those involved in doing so, need to expand their efforts, perhaps by creating a core of full-time trainers that can move around the country in the regional cities.

While it is always a risk to invest in training of locally elected officials, we found that the local Youth Departments were mostly lacking in any sort of training other than their own education, and most of them were very young and just out of the University themselves. Any local government training that takes place should insist on having the Chairpersons of the Youth Department attend.

While Internews has a special program for youth called Kids' Crossroads, we would suggest that the program in Albania that created a TV show called Heroes of Albania, could be another possible model for involving youth in productions about their communities, perhaps working with some of the small infrastructure projects to show what is being done around the country. Once a week, Heroes showed a half-hour segment highlighting a community's successful effort to build a bridge, or renovate an orphanage, or put a hard surface on a muddy track to make it a road. The program was extremely successful in giving Albanians pride in their own efforts, showing that a community can achieve much by working together, and it gave a feeling of usefulness and societal inclusion. The Youth Houses have journalism and film clubs that could be involved in the programs locally.

A program in Ukraine offered prizes to young journalists who reported stories about youth and NGO projects that were helping do positive actions in their communities. The stories gave NGOs around the country moral support, and often, new ideas.

#### **E. SO 3.4 CATALYZE IMPROVEMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES IN TARGETED AREAS**

This SO targets youth more directly than all the others. The Team, given time constraints and a specific scope of work, did not have an opportunity to look closely at the Georgia Community Mobilization Initiative (GCMi) with its three program components: community mobilization to achieve small projects with "increasing levels of community contributions," the provision of social services led by NGOs, and a Social Policy Initiative Group.

However, the Team Leader has had considerable experience in the post-conflict Balkans and suggests that there are lessons to be learned from Kosovo's experience that could be useful to the USAID Mission in Georgia. For instance, after the 1999 conflict, Mercy Corps went into communities to form Health Committees, which were mostly made up mostly of young village women, though men joined in some cases. The women were given basic health training, and were part of a core group that worked on the rehabilitation of clinics, schools and other small

infrastructure projects. This model could be used in Georgia to expand knowledge of health issues while also involving the community in the building and the eventual maintenance of their “own” projects. Hopefully, the results achieved by the GCMI project in Georgia are similar to those in Kosovo where furthering communication between villages and the municipalities, some of whom had never spoken before, were surprisingly lasting several years after the projects were finished. In each case in Kosovo the community contributed some part of the cost of the rehabilitation in either cash or labor. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Oxfam had similar projects, (most of which dealt with potable water supply and sanitation) that might also provide models to compare with those being used in Georgia, especially where there is still a need to transition away from humanitarian assistance, and perhaps to supply ideas for fine-tuning IR 3.4.1’s Communities Meet Basic Needs component. The Mercy Corps Project in Kosovo may suggest ideas for IR 3.4.2 Prevention of Disease and Access to Quality Health Care Improved. (Footnote See the Final Evaluation of SO 3.1 done for the Kosovo Mission in December 2003.)

The Assessment Team found youth sadly lacking in information about HIV/AIDS and STDs. While UNICEF is active in this field, USAID’s staff working in this area should be aware that TV is the source for most information for youth and concentrate their messages through this channel, while brochures and posters tend to go unread. Working with partners in media, the message about prevention could be more widely spread throughout the country.

The new youth project, might work with a group of the Youth House and Club “graduates” to create the beginning of a Youth Employment Network, which has been described with other suggestions under SO 1.3.

## **F. SO 4.1 SPECIAL INITIATIVES**

### ***Elections***

Mobilizing youth in get-out-the-vote projects has been successful in many countries where this sector of the population had been seen as apathetic. Using concerts and a wide selection of NGOs has involved youth in elections, but also in furthering reform agendas. We are aware that some of this has already been done in Georgia, but we suggest that the election work could be expanded in the future. Working with OSCE’s election monitoring arm, ODIHR, youth NGOs in many countries have been trained to be observers at the polling places. It has proven to be a useful civics lesson. In our fieldwork, the Team found that young people who had participated in pre-election work with IFES, became more interested in the process, and some of them later became activists in a number of different areas such as local government and in NGOs. Adding youth components to all phases of election activities; administration, monitoring, party development and voter education would be advisable.

### ***Anti-Trafficking***

Young people are aware of the dangers of trafficking in cities where the desire to go abroad is the strongest. IOM’s Report on Trafficking claims that 33% of the victims come from Tbilisi. While the Team found that the message was getting through to young people mostly via the TV, more education about how to avoid becoming a victim needs to take place, especially in the rural areas, using methods other than the TV. One of the main reasons that young people from cities and rural areas alike come to the capital is to find work. Tbilisi is also where the travel and visa

agencies can be found. The IOM study suggests that some of these agencies are engaging in legitimate travel arrangements, but a few are also assisting in irregular and illegal transport. While it will be a long-term proposition to solve the employment and poverty problems that are the major cause of trafficking, in the short-term, some of the agencies need to be investigated and prosecuted. The media coverage of the trials, and the stories that come out of them, would go a long way in the education of youth that is desperate to travel. All that is required, of course, is the political will to put some of the perpetrators on trial.

### ***Anti-Corruption***

If the World Bank and USAID survey on corruption done in 1998 found that the public is aware that corruption is widespread, our small survey shows that it is as much a problem for youth as it is for the adult population. In the case of young people, corruption is closely tied to their future, part of the cost of their education, and it is directly tied to their access to education, especially among the poorer students. Corruption also denigrates the education itself if a passing grade or a degree can be bought, further adding to the desire to go abroad to study, if their local degrees “are worth nothing.” Many of the children, especially in Tblisi, stated that the President himself only wants to hire people with a foreign degree. Thus, in many of their minds, the only way to get ahead is to pay to get that degree. The students in our focus groups felt encouraged that the exam system was showing signs of changing, and that merit rather than money may pay off eventually. Part of the civic education package, or even the proposed economic education suggested in SO 1.3, should be a piece on “the cost of corruption” in the daily lives of students and their families. This can be linked to corruption’s impact on the development of their own economy, both local and national.

## **G. CROSS-CUTTING EFFORTS**

Most of the special efforts, elections, anti-corruption and anti-trafficking have cross-cutting elements to them, and they, as well as the traditional SOs can easily accommodate youth components which have been suggested above. Conflict Resolution and Tolerance of Ethnicity and Gender are more difficult to implement as programs. However, the interviews and focus groups from our fieldwork give us a few suggestions. Human rights are a topic of great interest wherever we went, though knowledge about it is still in short supply. The subject should remain a core part of civic education course as it spreads to new schools.

All the Youth Clubs and Houses we interviewed were enthusiastic about the conflict resolution training they had had. They wanted to do more of it, and many of them expressed an interest in finding a way to make it a career. Almost all mentioned that the summer camp experience had solidified that training and that the friendships made there resulted in an on-going exchange of e-mails and letters – a few mentioned that there were cases of romance as well. Because it was mentioned by youth and adults alike, we suggest that another area where tolerance and conflict resolution are learned, seems to be in the summer camps that have been held for children by a number of donors. Both the youth and the adults that work with them, have mentioned the importance of these summer activities where group efforts in sports and games are shared. While summer camp is a luxury in the US and in Europe, it has been an important tradition in former Soviet countries, not just for the wealthy, but especially for the poor when they can be spared from agricultural labor. This is an old Soviet tradition that deserves to be maintained. The playing field is probably one of the best places for children to learn about playing by the rules,

giving everyone a chance, and solving conflicts through mediation. Broadening rather than restricting funding for camps that include all the ethnic groups and that give equal chances to boys and girls, would be a fine cross-cutting program. Hopefully, the adults can learn something from their children in this case as well, and it would not hurt if everyone had fun doing this. Packaging small summer projects to present to donors is a fairly easy task that could be done by some of the present implementers who should know of charities in Europe, the US and Canada to whom they could appeal for volunteers and funding.

## **H. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS ON INTEGRATING YOUTH INTO THE MISSION STRATEGY**

### ***1. Activities that Involve Youth***

Finally, in working with the idea of integrating youth in the Mission Strategy, we suggest that there are two important categories into which the activities should fall: those activities that affect youth, and those that actually involve youth in the activity itself. The young people we met were anxious to do things to improve their own future. Only a few were cynical or passive, once the “ice was broken” and they opened up. They need activities for after school and for the summer months. It is a good idea if these activities are useful, such a learning marketing or a language, but it is also good if they are having a good time while they learn tolerance. Joy is not something in which children can be overindulged. Each SO should adopt at least one activity that actually involves young people in the program or project, as Urban Institute has in using youth in community mobilization, and IFES in civic education.

### ***2. Activities that Affect Youth***

Each SO is working already on improving the conditions in Georgia, but could also focus on how that is actually improving the lives of youth. In some cases this will mean coordination with Soros, the World Bank and others who are helping reform the education system. In other cases it will simply involve reminding USAID’s partners that their work plans need some focus on youth regardless of how far-fetched the idea may be, as it might seem in much of the energy sector’s work. It could also be that the partners need to keep in closer touch with branch offices and plan to support them in some way even after their local NGOs have become “sustainable.” In the past Missions have been required to do such strategy planning for gender issues, and this Mission has done well to recognize that the time has come to do the same for youth.

## **VI. AN INVENTORY OF YOUTH RELATED ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY OTHER DONORS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS PAST AND FUTURE: SUCCESSES AND “LESSONS LEARNED”**

For this section, we are grateful for the assistance of the Eurasia Foundation that has just finished a survey of donor activities for children and youth.

### **A. GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE -WORLD BANK**

The Georgia Social Investment Fund II in partnership with USAID will hopefully benefit from previous USAID experience in infrastructure and community mobilization. The Balkan

Missions can provide both models that have worked and those that have not, specifically in Bosnia, Kosovo and Albania. The same holds true for the World Bank, EC and DFID-funded primary health care activities. While real community mobilization is apt to slow the initial part of the process while all the stakeholders are brought into the picture, these small projects go much better in the actual construction stage *with the community behind and involved in the effort*. They also can show groups of citizens how the bidding process works and how to manage a project with a transparent budget.

The World Bank Education Loan is working on a number of levels simultaneously. They have a series of indirect programs addressing curriculum reform, teacher training, anti-corruption skills and work in ethnic and religious tolerance.

For secondary schools the WB is working with the Ministry of Education to develop sports programs in schools. Curriculum reform has reduced the number of lessons per day from 8 to 6. Changes in the market in text books is making progress, but not without difficulties. While there is expanded choice in texts for teachers, the texts are now more expensive, and the publishers lack the capacity to print as many as are needed. The result is that texts continue to be photocopied, but there are still not enough of them. The WB is also making an effort to train publishers of texts in marketing and insisting on some regulation of quality.

The WB also is making changes in the exam system, which are to be put in place by 2005. There will be 15 exam centers throughout the country. The centers will not have the exam until the last minute, and possibly all the centers will all have different exams, so there will be less opportunity for various forms of corruption and cheating. This system is to go hand in hand with a change in financing for the university, so that 40% of the 10,000 students who pass the exams may get a stipend from the government and use it at any school in the country.

Three professions, teachers, lawyers and doctors will be accredited in the future by the state, which will result in fewer candidates for these degrees and fewer graduates. The WB is also planning for three levels of accreditation from entering level to advanced.

While the WB understands the need to reform the vocational schools, it is only working with the government on policy formation for the moment. The representative with whom we met also felt they needed to work on professional orientation, sports in the schools, tolerance, and that much more work needed to be done in the area of health. The Gudashauri Hospital will hopefully be a good example of management and modern medicine.

## **B. PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

The British Council is offering training programs for students of Journalism and Law on human rights protection. The training will be on religious liberty and literature in Georgian will be provided.

UNICEF is financing a “Young Journalists’ Network”. The program has courses for both youth and children who are already involved in media activity. They offer access to TV studios, Internet, and support to enter competitions.

The “Open Society – Georgia Foundation” has a media club in Batumi. The members of the club work with two newspapers, one of which devotes a page to students. There will be competitions for writing and posters, and the students will learn to do research with the help of the Batumi Research Institute and the Sociology Department at Batumi University.

### **C. TECHNICAL TRAINING**

It has been announced that the “Horizonti Foundation” will hold a grant competition to finance youth organizations. It also conducts training in organizational and project management for NGOs.

### **D. EXCHANGE PROGRAMS**

The East-East Program of the “Open Society – Georgia Foundation” helps private persons and organizations take part in international events, training and seminars. The Program also supports interesting seminars and conferences in Georgia.

### **E. CIVIC EDUCATION**

The “Open Society-Georgia” Foundation works with ABA/CEELI teaching constitutional law for law students. The program includes legal contests, debates, seminars and workshops. Apparently the program also financed legal clinics and a professional association, but the Team could not find out more about the results of these activities due to time constraints.

The International Center for Student Development in Batumi carried out several civil education projects in Adjara, despite the local government attempting to restrain their activities, which include debates and model parliaments.

### **F. EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS**

The “Open Society – Georgia Foundation” and the British Council offer exchange programs for Georgian youth at the Western and Central European Universities at both bachelor and master degree levels.

The CEP project of “Open Society – Georgia Foundation” invites lecturers from abroad and supports Georgian lecturers who go abroad. Those, who received a Ph.D. degree in the West, are eligible to participate in the program of local lecturers. The program also supports activities for students, such as curriculum development, libraries, conferences and debates.

### **G. YOUTH AND STUDENT PROJECTS**

The British Council plans to organize a two-week Summer Camp for participants from Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. From ten to fifteen students from each country will take part in training, workshops, and games with trainers from Northern Ireland.

The UNICEF Program of Health Protection for the Young Generation focuses on the problem of HIV/AIDS and delivers information to young people who are in the high risk groups. We were

told that the information that is available is sparse and somewhat inaccurate, especially in the regions. We had no chance to verify this, but given the level of knowledge about the subject in our focus groups, we suspect this program needs help. A soccer championship game called the "President's Cup" was held in 2003 in order to raise youth awareness about HIV/AIDS. The regional games, with the participation of well-known figures and singers, were a popular events.

UNICEF also sponsors the Children and Youth Parliament. In 2003, the second group was elected. The first Parliament group ended its formal work but claims to have set up an NGO. The parliament elects children from age 14 to 18, and young people age 18 to 21.

The "Open Society – Georgia Foundation" financed students' organizations at Tbilisi State University.

## **H. ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

The Library Service Center of the "Open Society – Georgia Foundation," is open to anyone. It has a library of books and catalogues. The Internet Center has been suspended, but anyone may use the Internet there for research. The Internet Center will open again when the new computers arrive.

The International Center of Student Development in Batumi funded by the "Open Society – Georgia Foundation" will provide information about opportunities to study abroad. The Center also offers training, seminars, a library, a film club, and a course for students preparing to take the TOEFL exam. The Center has free Internet service for university students, lecturers and researchers. The library has materials for TOEFL, GMAT, GRE exams, and a variety of publications and periodicals.

The "Open Society – Georgia Foundation" established the Kutaisi Consultation Center for International Education, which will offer information on exchange and educational programs for students and young people.

UNICEF has established three youth centers in Guria, Imereti and Gori, through the initiative of the Children and Youth Parliament. In the Centers, the young people have an opportunity to work with computers, a place to meet and for training. These are resource-centers intended as places to get and share information and skills.

## **I. CONFLICT REDUCTION**

The "Open Society – Georgia Foundation" has financed a Network of Youth Organizations in Abkhazia and Southern Ossetia, while continuing to maintain the Georgian Youth Organizations.

The "Open Society – Georgia Foundation" in cooperation with the EU, CDS and USAID is in the process of creating films for children in Azeri, Armenian and Georgian to develop tolerance, especially in young children.

The British Council financed a Regional Youth Forum called, "Living Together" that was held in Georgia in August and September. The project brings together young people of various cultures, from the United Kingdom and from other countries to help them learn to live together.

## **J. STREET CHILDREN AND DISABLED YOUTH**

Father Georgi, an Orthodox Priest, runs a *street children's program in a building being renovated* in Tbilisi (he also gives space to one of AED's Youth Clubs ) where they have courses in enamel jewelry, computer repair, and where he is also planning to train a group in auto mechanics. He uses mentoring and counseling to help children who have been on the street, or in prison to return to a normal life. He also mentioned that there was an order of Catholic priests who had opened a small home for severely disabled children.

GTZ and the City Council of Tbilisi also support some of the work being done with "Street Children." The disabled are part of future plans for the Central Government and Caritas.

## **K. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PROGRAMS**

The greater part of donor activity is still in the capital city. However, there seem to be an increasing number of donor programs in other Georgian cities. Some have even opened regional offices or facilities, such as UNICEF's three Youth Centers in Guria (Ozurgeti), Imereti (Kutaisi) and Shida Kartli (Gori). This year, they intend to establish as many as twelve more Centres.

The "Open Society –Georgia Foundation" has Representative Offices in Kutaisi and Batumi. They are there as information and consulting centers. The Batumi Center also implements educational projects for youth.

# **VII. SUCCESSFUL ACTIVITIES AND OTHER LESSONS LEARNED**

## **A. CIVIC EDUCATION AND STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

There is no question in anyone's mind, the adults working with youth, government figures and the Assessment Team, that the programs in civic education and student government are essential to continue. Wherever we found youth who had participated in these programs, they were more alert, full of questions and knew that change depended on them as well as everyone else. These were the few in our focus groups who were not looking to government to solve their problems. (Footnote For further discussion of this project, see the Mid-Term evaluation "Active Schools Bring Change," May 2004.)

In other projects where youth mobilization has taken place, even for a single event, such as the city clean-up jobs and the polling activities done by Urban Institute, we found the young people pleased and excited and wanting more things to do. In Gori they were ready to get together and clean up the main square. In other cases they wanted to fix their own schools if they could just get the new windows and some paint and plaster. There is willingness there to be involved and volunteer. All that is needed is more opportunity to support them and show them how.

## **B. YOUTH HOUSES AND CLUBS**

There has been excellent work done in the Youth Houses and Youth Clubs for IDPs and in some cases, for local children who were included. However, we found that the resources were few for so many who need attention and help. This is particularly true in Western Georgia where a large percentage of the total population is IDPs, who are living in the middle of people as poor as they

are. (More on this will be found in the evaluation to follow.) However, an important “lesson learned” from these two projects is that while the Houses may be expensive to fund, they are the base for the most successful Youth Clubs, and it is their work together that makes, what we will call the “Club House,” such a success. In other places where the Clubs are without a House to work in, they are struggling to survive, or they have become dependent on some branch of local government.

Another success from the Youth Clubs is the training in conflict management. The clubs in both Abkhazia and in Georgia continue to have on-going communication by e-mail and by letter and only wish they had more opportunity to get together. They know they need more resources to reach more of the youth who need help, but appear to be capable of doing that if they have the opportunity in the future. They also hope the political opportunity will be offered for them to work together face to face.

### **C. ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Wherever there is access to Internet, whether through Soros or through the Youth Houses, the demand is high for its use. This includes the need to learn computer programs and languages. However, Georgian youth must not be left to think that these two subjects alone are enough to prepare them for the job market. While patronage and the purchase of positions, will hopefully soon be a thing of the past, the young people need to understand they will have to have other skills as well. There is little opportunity for any sort of internships or hands-on experience offered anywhere, which is another problem that will need to be solved soon.

### **D. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

Finally, while Urban Institute is doing a fine job of training some local government officials, the Youth Departments on the local level are, on the whole, unaware of resources for youth, or even how to use their small budgets to address youth concerns. As other participatory community programs come into the regional cities, they could meet with other departments than just the Mayor or the Deputy. Including the Education and Youth branches of local government, and helping these local authorities reach out to their own communities would be beneficial to all, and probably increase the chances of programmatic success as well.

## **IX. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. YOUTH CONCERNS**

#### ***1. Number One: Education***

During the Assessment, the focus group participants everywhere stressed the low level of their education and the “big gap” between the secondary and the high school programs. The material they need to know (and are not taught) that require tutoring for entrance exams, they consider to be a source of corruption on one hand, and proof of the non-effectiveness of education reform, on the other hand. Here and there we found several students say they “had heard” that a new system for the exams was being put into effect, but as yet they saw no changes.

## Recommendations

- ▶ While the World Bank and other organizations, such as Soros, are making progress with reforms in education, perhaps an effort could be made to publicize the expected outcomes, so students and parents can be better informed about future intensions. Internews may be able to make several of the “Kid’s Crossroads” programs on the topics of textbooks, exams, and teacher training.

There is a clear message from our focus groups and interviews that civic education is having a substantial and positive impact where it is being taught, as is the holding of school elections.

- ▶ The schools in which these model programs are taking place are “believers” and could be brought into the process of preparing an expanded project to reach more schools. The present implementers could gather more specific data on the results of their programs and elicit suggestions from the students and teachers about how the program should be continued. It could then be offered as a project for buy-ins for bi-lateral embassies or international organizations.
- ▶ Basic business skills and values could be included in future teacher training programs for schools. An understanding of market forces, even on a local level is understandable to young people, but the teaching needs to be done with concrete examples. Where programs are working in agro-business in rural areas, they could include a school program that would illustrate the process of getting vegetables to market and what is required to package and sell them in a larger market. Both the World Bank and Soros should be encouraged to include such a curriculum when training teachers. Other USAID partners could be brought in to create school programs wherever they are working in the country.

## 2. *Number Two Concern: Employment*

While young people are justifiably worried about whether or not their education is relevant to their job possibilities, there is a broad gap between what they think will get them a job and any knowledge of standard job descriptions. Their parents and teachers are ill equipped to advise them. The old Social Employment Funds serve neither the employers’ needs, nor those of the job seekers. They too have fallen into the informational void. In this environment, it is no wonder that young people continue to rely on a “patron” or “who they know” to find their way.

In spite of the respondents’ ages, unemployment is one of the biggest problems concerning youth. This problem is central to their futures, which is why it was also frequently mentioned during discussion of other topics. Most of them feel that knowledge of computers and a foreign language, mostly English, will be enough to get them a good job. There is some hope among most of them that merit and competence will be more important in the future. We also found that while many want to go abroad for employment, this is more because of need. Most of them would like to be able to stay in Georgia to work.

Unemployment obviously, has a direct connection to youth’s other concerns about “financial problems,” the use of free time, and access to information.

## Recommendations

- ▶ A Youth Employment Agency would be a way to focus on the real job market and to combat corruption at the same time. A core group of Youth Club “graduates” could be brought together for training, which would include such topics as writing basic job descriptions and resumes, and how to canvass local employers for job openings. Teaching the group how to match employers and skill inventories on a database, as well as interviewing both employers and future employees, would be the basis for a local network. Such an effort would require considerable communication between implementers of the new youth activity and partners working in SO 1.3 projects.
- ▶ Other possibilities for training youth for service and communications businesses also could be linked with some of the computer and language training being offered by Youth Clubs. Banking is another area where young people could be trained to go straight from high school into banks as tellers.
- ▶ An important addition to job creation would be to work with rural women to create groups that could process and market cheese, fruit, and other agricultural products that lend themselves to the start-up of small agro-businesses and food processing. Micro-loans would be needed, but these require only basic business skills. The women are often left behind in rural areas to make a living while the men are working abroad or in the larger cities. While this is not an exclusively youth program, many of the women are young, but children would be better off with mothers who have income from such a project. Eventually, on-going businesses would also supply employment for rural youth who tend to leave school earlier than their urban counterparts.
- ▶ Because it appears to be essential for job creation at this point in Georgia’s transition, the Team would like to be able to suggest a plan for not only reviving the system of vocational education in Georgia, but also in taking away some of the stigma with which it is currently burdened. However, the time allowed to study the problem was not sufficient during this Assessment to make programmatic suggestions. We do recommend that the Mission, perhaps in conjunction with the World Bank, which is working with the problem on a policy level, draft a study to detail the present state of vocational education and its facilities at present, and evaluate what would be needed to update the curriculum. The study should also suggest ways to change the image of the sector as a choice for young people as an alternative to a university education.
- ▶ The field of fee collection and meter reading should be considered as part of the energy program. Using local community mobilization techniques, there are opportunities to combat corruption locally, and to maintain local systems, as well as providing a number of employment opportunities for meter readers and technicians.

### 3. *Youth Concern Number Three: Problems related to Education and Employment*

While the following concerns are high on the lists of young people throughout Georgia, they are all related to the need for reforms in education and for job creation in order to relieve the poverty that is at the root of the problems.

Financial problems are important particularly because without money, access to education, to jobs, to medicine, to entertainment is not possible. Many children talked about their “friends” who had these problems, but in many cases we could see they were talking about themselves as well as about neighbors. For many, financial insecurity also made them feel socially inferior. Getting an education comes close to being a moral responsibility for many children. Without a diploma, many of them said, they were nothing. Also important, was that there was practically no discussion of vocations that did not require an education. Going to a technical or vocational school, they felt, implies you have failed.

As though this were not enough of a handicap, youth also have few opportunities outside of school for other developmental activities. The old system promoted sports; young pioneers went to help during harvests to pick fruit and vegetables. There were summer camps, environmental NGOs, hiking trips and vacations. These are rarities now and have been replaced with cafes, TV and the street. There is little preparation here for a productive social life, even less if one adds the constraints of poverty among so many of the young.

### **Free Time**

Due to an overloaded program (too many subjects, or too little time allotted to the important subjects), the problem with free time is that there was not enough of it for those “who study well in secondary school.” Whether they had too much or too little, for most youth, free time activities are either unavailable or unaffordable.

#### *Recommendation*

- ▶ While the World Bank is working to promote athletics programs in schools, and many NGOs hold sporting events, more needs to be done to form athletic clubs outside of school. The International Organizations for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts might also be brought to Georgia, which would provide an opportunity for local activities as well as international jamborees.

### **Access to information**

There is a general lack of information about youth activities taking place. The majority of the interviewees had no idea about existing organizations working on youth problems. Only exchange programs were mentioned among youth activities. Internet cafes, cinema and theatre (or the lack of them) are considered the main places for out-of-school entertainment. This generation relies on the TV for information, and the Internet, if it is available. Very few mentioned reading newspapers or magazines, as they are expensive.

#### *Recommendation*

- ▶ There are a number of efforts to broaden access to the Internet, such as UNICEF and Soros. As the USAID’s Youth Clubs are expanded, the implementer should place computers in the new Centers where not just the Club, but also other young people can come and use the Internet. At the suggestion of many of our focus group participants, the Youth Clubs need to go into the schools and cafes to broaden their outreach, and not rely on word of mouth, or on flyers and brochures to let young people know of their activities.

## **Corruption**

Children encounter corruption at every turn, and while they accept it as part of their lives, the acceptance is reluctant. What stood out in all the discussions, whether it was about education, employment, health, or entertainment, is that they are offended by corruption and are keenly aware of its unfairness. Youth are a group that wants to change the situation if they can be empowered to do so.

### *Recommendation*

- ▶ Part of the civic education package, or even the proposed economic education suggested in SO 1.3, should be a piece on “the cost of corruption” in the daily lives of students and their families. This can be linked to corruption’s impact on the development of their own economy, both local and national.

## **IDPs, Substance Abuse, the Disabled and Street-Children**

The problems of “street children,” the disabled and IDPs concern the young people deeply. There is a sense that “there but for a couple of GEL, I can see myself.” The concern is genuine for people they live and go to school with, but the problem is so pervasive that it adds to their own fear of the present and of the future. This fear is heightened for many young people who live in families where substance abuse is common, given the level of unemployment. The conclusion returns us again to the need for employment, and continued support, both moral and financial, for programs both planned and on going that deal with these problems, whether they are run by the Church, the Government, or international organizations.

### *Recommendation*

- ▶ Social service NGOs should be encouraged to take on more of these activities with youth, which many are already doing, but many of them need help in fund-raising, managing volunteers and in expanding their membership base to include vulnerable social sectors. More will be said on this further on.

## **Trafficking**

In the cities, most of the participants knew about trafficking, and a surprising number told of harrowing experiences of illegal migrants. Few of the children from the rural areas knew about trafficking, probably due to the lack of power for TV reception, which seems to be the source of the most of the available information on this topic.

### *Recommendation*

- ▶ More TV spots could be dedicated to the dangers of trafficking, and other avenues of information need to be found for the rural areas, and the schools are the most likely candidate for that role.

### *Recommendation*

- ▶ While it will be a long-term proposition to solve the employment and poverty problems that are the major cause of trafficking, in the short-term, the “travel” agencies that engage in illegal emigration and trafficking need to be investigated and prosecuted. The media coverage of the trials, and the stories that come out of them, would go a long way in the education of youth that is desperate to travel. All that is required, of course, is the political will to put some of the perpetrators on trial.

### **HIV/AIDS**

The Assessment Team found youth sadly lacking in information about HIV/AIDS and STDs.

### *Recommendation*

- ▶ While UNICEF is active in this field, USAID’s staff promoting efforts at education in this area should be aware that TV is the source for most information for youth and concentrate their messages through this channel, as brochures and posters tend to go unread. Working with partners in media, the message about prevention could be more widely spread throughout the country.

### **Ethnic and Religious Conflict**

The discussions on ethnic and religious tolerance were surprising. While there is some discomfort with different “cultural habits,” and some sense of exclusion because of language, we found none of the youth were prejudiced against any other religion or ethnic group – except for the Jehovah’s Witnesses. The sense that the Witnesses were trying to obligate vulnerable people to believe as they do was upsetting to them.

### *Recommendation*

- ▶ Soros and other donors are putting together films on diversity for young children. The Youth Houses and Clubs have media groups that could be enlisted to contribute more on subjects such as “living together,” films of joint activities, and local cultural studies targeted to older students.

### **Conflict and Protest**

While students often accuse each other of being passive, when it comes to conflict, they are all for diplomacy and mediation. However, while they think getting together and discussing matters is the best way to solve problems, most were not afraid to suggest protest as a means of being heard. At least one in every group was ready to protest first and talk later. The overall feeling was that, while discussion is most acceptable, protest is a more effective means of being heard. The path of conflict and protest, or of mediation and advocacy is a choice for civil society, and preparation for being a responsible citizen needs to start early.

## Recommendations

- ▶ Working with OSCE's election monitoring arm, *ODIHR*, youth NGOs in many countries have been trained to be observers at the polling places. It has proven to be a useful civics lesson. In our fieldwork, the Team found that young people, who had participated in pre-election work with IFES, became more interested in the process, and some of them later became activists in a number of different areas such as local government and in NGOs. Adding youth components to all phases of election activities; administration, monitoring, party development and voter education would be advisable.
- ▶ Elections in schools are also showing dramatic results by giving young people a hands-on experience with voting and introducing them to the idea that they have responsibilities that go along with their rights. Involvement in politics outside the school and later in political parties is more likely to take place if it has already been experienced first hand.
- ▶ Almost all youth mentioned that a summer camp experience had solidified training and friendships with many different social groups and nationalities. Because it was mentioned by youth and adults alike, we suggest that another area where tolerance and conflict resolution are learned, seems to be in the summer camps that have been held for children by a number of donors. Both the youth and the adults that work with them, have mentioned the importance of these. Charitable groups from the US and Europe should be encouraged to fund these and support them with volunteers when possible as UMCOR and the YMCA have done in the past. Youth Clubs members can be trained to write proposals to these organizations for their summer activities.

## 4. *Number Four: The Future: Solving problems and Changing Attitudes*

The participants mentioned a great variety of problems that they face in everyday life, but most are not actively trying to solve them. They do not see a role for themselves as participants in the problem solving process. They prefer to wait for someone else to take responsibility for solving their problems. Not having an idea of their role in society, they are also not sure whether they will be able to do anything for their own future. They are not used to acting independently, much of which may be the result of Georgian family structure, which results in statements such as: "Nobody cares what my opinion is about anything," or "We are accustomed to the fact that our parents or somebody else solves our problems." Many children do not feel they even have the right to express their own opinions. "Nobody is interested in children's opinions," or "Nobody will take into consideration what I have to say." The notable exceptions we found had received civic education, or been part of a youth group of some kind. The conclusion could be drawn here, that the new program to expand the number of youth clubs is an excellent choice of directions for the USAID Mission.

The lack of understanding of a citizen's rights and responsibilities and few ideas about their role in the society, suggests that the level of civic education among the youth is still extremely minimal. Youth are afraid of their futures, though with the change in government there seems to be a renewal of hope for future.

## **Recommendations**

- ▶ While Internews has a special program for youth called Kids' Crossroads, we would suggest that the program in Albania that created a TV show called Heroes of Albania, could be another possible model for involving youth in productions about their communities, perhaps working with some of the small infrastructure projects to show what is being done around the country. The program was extremely successful in giving Albanians pride in their own efforts, showing that a community can achieve much by working together, and it gave a feeling of usefulness and societal inclusion. The Youth Houses have journalism and film clubs that could work on the project locally.
- ▶ Given that young journalists are being trained in a number of areas, another might be to offer prizes to young journalists who report stories about youth and NGO projects that were helping do positive actions in their communities.
- ▶ Organizations such as Mercy Corps are expert at going into rural villages to set up health committees, mostly made up of young village women who are given basic health training. They then become part of a core group that works toward the rehabilitation of clinics, schools and other small infrastructure projects, by engaging donors and local governments. This model could be used in Georgia to expand knowledge of health issues while also involving the community in the building and the eventual maintenance of their "own" projects.
- ▶ In the process of interviewing groups of trainers and "graduates" of the AED Youth Clubs, we asked them what they thought the most important issues were in their lives. All of them said that Conflict Mediation was at the top of their list, and some of them wanted to make this a career. Of next importance for them were trafficking, human rights and HIV/AIDS. They also see drugs and alcohol as problems that are symptomatic of unemployment and of the lack of extra-curricular activity for youth, and lack of access to education. Many of these IDPs are homeless or living under extremely crowded conditions in camps. Hiring them as trainers for crosscutting programs could exponentially spread information to more people.

## **B. THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT AND NGOS**

### ***1. Government***

Both Central and local government, as well as NGOs recognize the challenges, but overall their capacity to address these needs is limited by both their budgets and their lack of experience. All of these players need help strengthening their ability to broaden and deepen the services the population needs.

Central Government is aware of the problems of youth, but can address only a few of them for the neediest. They must also work to satisfy the elites who provide their power base. They hope the local departments will work with NGOs to stretch their small budgets. Even the Central departments appear to be anxious to work with donor programs. This is all the more reason for coordination among donors, and for them to maintain good communication with the Central Government Ministries on a regular basis.

On the level of local government, the old institutions are virtually bankrupt both in resources and in ideas. They have financial autonomy, but with nothing in the coffers. Actions are still taken using the old Soviet methods and models. They are in charge of youth that is unprepared for the present challenges. It speaks well for them that they know what these challenges are, but their resources, both monetary and experiential, are minimal. Very few local authorities know how to work with the local NGOs. In other cases it is a fine line between working with and coopting those organizations. This suggests that strong support is needed for the local offices of the NGOs that are based in Tblisi, and that when the local offices gain a “sustainable status,” they still need regular follow-up support and mentoring from the original program implementors.

## **Recommendations**

- ▶ While it is always a risk to invest in training of locally elected officials, we found that the local Youth Departments were mostly lacking in any sort of training other than their own education, also most of them were very young and just out of the University. Any local government training that takes place should insist on having the Chairpersons of the Youth Department attend the training.
- ▶ The school psychologists in Rustavi who had already received training from a number of donor efforts, know that neither local authorities nor the Central Government will be able to help them for sometime to come. They, however, are at the center of the student, teacher, parent group, in other words, at the center of local communities. They have good ideas about how to use their few resources for the greatest impact, and would be an ideal group with whom to work in the future.

## **2. NGOs**

Most of the **NGOs** that the Team interviewed were following traditional missions; e.g. creating events, competitions and charitable activities. The challenge of creating free-time programs and helping the poor is being met to the best of their abilities, with limited resources - mostly volunteers and a few donor grants. They are all overwhelmed by the enormity of the needs and by their limited capacity to deal with them. It is discouraging, most of them admit, but they say they also try to remind themselves that at least they are doing something.

## **Recommendations**

- ▶ Training in NGO management, the recruitment of volunteers, developing a broader based membership, and fundraising are all topics that would permit these organizations to better manage themselves before they are able to be either organizationally or financially sustainable. While it is understood that this training is taking place presently, those involved in doing so, need to expand their efforts, perhaps by creating a core of full-time trainers that can move around the country in the regional cities. (Footnote See Counterpart International’s independent and sustainable training organization, Counterpart Creative Center, in Ukraine as a model.)
- ▶ The programs supporting student government and civic education in schools have formed a core of activist students on whom many of the NGO leaders depend to implement the organizations’ activities. These students are either working for or managing NGOs that

are reaching out to the most needy in their communities. There are not nearly enough of these young people to meet the overwhelming need. Continued training at this juncture is essential to expand the outreach of all ongoing programs.

## **C. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS ON INTEGRATING YOUTH INTO USAID'S STRATEGY**

### ***1. Activities that Involve Youth***

Finally, in working with the idea of integrating youth in the Mission Strategy, we suggest that there are two important categories into which the activities should fall: those activities that affect youth, and those that actually involve youth in the activity itself. The young people we met were anxious to do things to improve their own future. Only a few were cynical or truly passive, we found, once the “ice was broken” and they could open up. They need activities for after school and for the summer months. It is a good idea if these activities are useful, such a learning marketing or a language, but it is also good if they are having a good time while they learn tolerance. Joy is not something in which children can be overindulged. Each SO should adopt at least one activity that actually involves the young people in the program or project, as Urban Institute has in using youth in community mobilization, and IFES in civic education.

### ***2. Activities that Affect Youth***

Each SO is working already on improving the conditions in Georgia, but could also focus on how that is actually improving the lives of youth. In some cases this will mean coordination with Soros, the World Bank and others who are helping reform the education system. In other cases it will simply involve reminding USAID's partners that their work plans need some focus on youth. It could also be that the partners need to keep in closer touch with branch offices and plan to support them in some way even after their local NGOs have become “sustainable.” In the past Missions have been required to do such strategy planning for gender issues, and this Mission has done well to recognize that the time has come to do the same for youth.

This assessment offers some suggestions about how USG assistance can be of further help in targeting youth in all its programs, both in specific SOs, in crosscutting areas, and in special efforts. Each one of the SO Teams should think of activities that involve youth and others that affect youth. In doing so, they should take several programmatic goals into consideration:

- Is the activity going to help prepare youth for future employment?
- Will the activity somehow empower youth as leaders and “doers”?
- Do the organizations implementing the programs have management skills that will be imparted to the people with whom they work? Do they have good baseline data to start with? Do they practice democratic governance (to some degree) in the work place and transparency in decision-making?
- What specific youth needs is the activity going to address and is the implementing of the program consistent with the organization's mission?
- In planning for intermediate results, is more emphasis being put on measuring program impact using quantitative (numbers trained, number of members, number of workshops held, etc) or on more difficult qualitative measures that actually show impact (what

participants did with training, outreach to what sort of new members, results from workshop attendance, etc.)?

The Assessment Team thinks the last question is particularly important for SO Teams after reviewing their Project Management Plans, which largely rely on quantitative measures.

This assessment supports the USAID Mission/Georgia's assumptions in its new Country Strategy, that first of all, hopes for a better reception to a reform agenda in its work with the new Government of Georgia, while USAID's focus expands its efforts at the local government and community levels.

The Georgia Country Strategy for FY 1999-2003 already based most of its programs in a community setting, and included local government and NGO development, agribusiness activity, electrical distribution and community development. The new Strategy will further coordinate these efforts on a local level in order to have a greater impact on the "values, attitudes and mindset" of the Georgian people, while still supporting "the more traditional objectives of social transformation, economic growth, and democratic pluralism." (Footnote Strategy page 8) We hope this assessment adds some "food for thought" about some ways this might be done.

Given the tensions at both local and national levels in Georgia, the Mission also intends to use techniques that "explicitly seek to prevent conflict" across the board in its programs. Any conflict, whether it stems from ethnic, linguistic or religious differences, is seen as a threat to Georgia's survival as a nation. While the source of many of these tensions is outside the control of USAID, we found that there is great energy and optimism among Georgia's youth, and a fundamental tolerance and sense of fairness that only needs supporting to assure, at least internal mediation and conciliation.

Finally, the Mission also appears to presume that while it will work with the GoG, the creation of more participatory communities able to advocate for reform will assure the momentum of the reform agenda. Even if the GoG should lose that momentum at some point, USAID feels that the continued strengthening of local institutions cannot help but better the lives of Georgians in the long run. Hopefully, this assessment will help to support the activities based on that presumption if the recommendations are implemented by USAID and other donors, so that more of the problems and issues for youth are addressed, which will help to maintain their hope in the future during Georgia's difficult transition years.

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## ANNEX A

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## ANNEX B

### LIST OF CONTACTS

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Bela Kopaliani – Project Coordinator, Youth Club, Tbilisi

Besik Kalimashvili – Chairperson, "Union of Veterans," Telavi

Eka Japiashvili – Local Coordinator, Urban Institute, Gori

Father Georgi Chachava – Director, NGO "Mkurnali" (Children Shelter)

Georgi Kvabziridze – Speaker of Youth Parliament (former) Chairman, International Youth Network for Peace and Cooperation

Georgi Mnatishvili – Director, "Youth Union", Rustavi

Gigi Tevzadze – Education Project Director, World Bank

Gocha Ugulava – Deputy Governor, Tskaltubo Rayon

Guram Khizanishvili – Chairman, Georgian Students Union, Gori

Irakli Kalichava – Senior Monitor, Int. Committee of Red Cross (ICRC), Zugdidi

Irakli Nadiradze – Chair, Youth Department, Ministry of Culture and Sports of Georgia

Keti Dvalishvili – Head, Youth Department, Gori Municipality

Khatuna Gadilia – Program Coordinator, Association "Atinati", Zugdidi

Leila Suleimanova – Director, "Azerbaijan Women's Society in Georgia", Marneuli/Tbilisi

Levan Javakhishvili – Coordinator, Horizonti Foudation, Telavi

Levan Toprakashvili – Chairperson, Youth Department, Municipality of Rustavi

Madona Dodashvili – School Psychologist, Georgian Gymnasium, Rustavi

Madona Tsintsadze – Regional Coordinator, IFES Civil Education Program, Kutaisi

Maka Korkelia – Social Worker, Project "War Child", Association "Atinati", Zugdidi

Manana Shashviashvili - Steering Committee Member, "Fund of Life", Telavi

Maka Kobrava - School Psychologist, Secondary school #2, Rustavi

Marika Mghebrishvili – Director, "Biliki," Gori

Marika Shioshvilil- Assistant Chief of Party, Urban Institute

Maya Dzodzuashvili – Executive Chair, Youth Union, Kutaisi

Maya Katamadze – Leader, Youth Club "Favoriti," Batumi

Maya Kenchadze – Psychologist, Psycho-social Service Center, Rustavi

Maya Surmanizde – Leader, YMCA, Batumi

Mikheil Zhorzholiani – Chief of Youth Department, Tskaltobo Rayon  
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Nana Tsetskldaze – Chairman, Adjara Trade Union Counsel, Batumi  
Pharna Makashvili – Chairperson, Youth Department, Municipality of Telavi  
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Rusudan Bregadze – Steering Committee Member, Initiative Group Project "Education", Kutaisi  
Rusudan Dvali – Chairperson, Fund "Banovani – Woman, Family Society", Georgia  
Rusudan Kalichava – Executive Director, Youth House, Association "Atinati," Zugdidi  
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Robert Wilson, Deputy Mission Director

*Program and Project Support Office*

Michael Nehrbass- Program Officer  
Inga Tsutskiridze- Program Development Specialist  
Khatuna Ioseliani- Project Management Specialist

*Youth Cross-Cutting Team:*

Khalid Khan, Cross-Cutting Team Leader  
Khatuna Ioseliani, Sub-Team Leader

*SO 3.4 Catalyze Improvement of Social and Health Services in Targeted Areas  
Team:*

Khalid Khan, SOT Leader

## Implementing Partners

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Keti Khutsishvili- Country Director, Eurasia Foundation Georgia  
Anna Zhvania – Program Officer, Civil Society  
Maya Gogoladze – Civic Education Specialist, IFES  
Sopo Titvinidze-Youth Program Coordinator, Urban Institute

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## ANNEX C

### ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

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ABA/CEELI	—	American Bar Association/Central European and Eurasian Legal Initiative
AED	—	Academy for Educational Development
DFID	—	(British) Department for International Development
E&E	—	USAID Bureau for Europe and Eurasia
EC	—	European Commission
EU	—	European Union
FGD	—	Focus Group Discussion
FY	—	Fiscal Year
GCMi	—	Georgia Community Mobilization Initiative
GEL	—	Georgian Lare
GoG	—	Government of Georgia
GTZ	—	German Technical Assistance Agency
HIV/AIDs	—	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IDPs	—	Internally Displaced Person
IFES	—	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
IREX	—	International Research and Exchange Board
IOM	—	International Organization for Migration
NGOs	—	Non-Governmental Organizations
ODIHR	—	Organization for Democratic Initiatives and Human Relations
OSCE	—	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PTA	—	Parent Teacher Association
SO	—	Strategic Objective
STDs	—	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UMCOR	—	United Methodist Committee on Relief
UNDP	—	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	—	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	—	United Nations International Children and Education Fund
USAID	—	United States Agency for International Development
WB	—	World Bank
YMCA	—	Young Men's Christian Association

## ANNEX D

### FOCUS RESULT TABLES

#### FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION ZUGDIDI

Participants – 8	
Male – 3	Female - 5
Age group – 15 yr – 2; 16 yr – 2; 17 yr – 2; 18 yr – 2	
In school – 5	Out of school - 1
Students –2	

ZUGDIDI	MAIN PROBLEMS
Participant 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of places for entertainment (cinema, theatre)</li> <li>2. Low quality education in secondary schools</li> <li>3. Lack of knowledge/unawareness about human rights and violations</li> </ol>
Participant 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Human rights</li> <li>2. Lack of places for entertainment</li> <li>3. Lack of support for a healthy life style</li> </ol>
Participant 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Street children and their involvement in education process</li> <li>2. Intellectual development</li> <li>3. Proper use of free time</li> </ol>
Participant 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial problems in the family</li> <li>2. Relations among family members (violations)</li> <li>3. Lack of places for entertainment</li> </ol>
Participant 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of places for entertainment</li> <li>2. Financial problems</li> <li>3. Child rights protection</li> </ol>
Participant 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employment of youth</li> <li>2. Lack of places for entertainment</li> <li>3. Daily cleaning of the city</li> </ol>
Participant 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Inaccessibility of education (English language) due to financial problems</li> <li>2. Drug abuse</li> <li>3. Lack of places for entertainment</li> <li>4. Lack of youth activities in the city discourages expression of ideas, opinions</li> </ol>
Participant 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Progressively increasing number of street children</li> <li>2. Violation of children's rights</li> <li>3. Absence of youth organizations in the region</li> </ol>

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION TELAVI

Participants – 9	
Male – 5	Female - 4
Age group – 15 yr – 2; 16 yr – 3; 17 yr – 1; 18 yr – 3.	
In school – 4	Out of school - 2
Students – 3	

TELAVI	MAIN PROBLEMS
Participant 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Violation of human rights at school</li> <li>2. Attitude of teachers to children</li> <li>3. Low quality of education</li> </ol>
Participant 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corruption in education system</li> <li>2. Students reluctance to get an education</li> <li>3. Unemployment of graduates</li> </ol>
Participant 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corruption</li> <li>2. Education system problems</li> <li>3. Violation of rights</li> </ol>
Participant 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of self-esteem</li> <li>2. Activity in social life very limited</li> <li>3. Perfect education is impossible</li> </ol>
Participant 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Poverty</li> <li>2. Corruption in education system</li> <li>3. Lack of activeness – passive youth</li> </ol>
Participant 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reluctance of students to study</li> <li>2. Financial shortages</li> <li>3. Problem of street children</li> </ol>
Participant 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low quality education compared to developed countries</li> <li>2. Proper use of free time</li> <li>3. Passive governmental sector concerning reforms</li> </ol>
Participant 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Free time management</li> <li>2. Corruption</li> <li>3. Informational shortage</li> <li>4. Material problems</li> </ol>
Participant 9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wasting of spare time</li> <li>2. Poverty</li> <li>3. Low activity – passive youth</li> </ol>

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION TBILISI

Participants – 8	
Male – 4	Female - 4
Age group – 16 yr – 3; 17 yr – 2; 18 yr – 3.	
In school – 1	Out of school
Students –7	

TBILISI	MAIN PROBLEMS
Participant 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stable pension for socially vulnerable so students have the possibility to be taught by young lecturers.</li> <li>2. Employment</li> <li>3. Fighting against drugs – good law enforcement staff</li> </ol>
Participant 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Education – in schools and high schools</li> <li>2. Employment for students</li> <li>3. Fighting against drugs</li> <li>4. Entertainment – financial problem to get</li> </ol>
Participant 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Education</li> <li>2. Economics</li> <li>3. Development</li> </ol>
Participant 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unemployment</li> <li>2. Exchange programs</li> <li>3. Education</li> </ol>
Participant 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Education in high schools</li> <li>2. Unemployment</li> <li>3. Ambitions are frustrated</li> </ol>
Participant 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Correspondence of school education and high school exams</li> <li>2. Unemployment</li> <li>3. 70% of boys are drug-addicts</li> </ol>
Participant 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Entertainment places</li> <li>2. Education and corruption in this system</li> <li>3. Stable jobs</li> </ol>
Participant 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unemployment, economic hardship, followed by drugs and criminal behavior</li> <li>2. Low quality education, reduction of value of education</li> <li>3. Fear of staying in Georgia, fear of the future</li> </ol>

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION TBILISI

Participants – 10	
Male – 6	Female - 4
Age group – 14 yr – 2; 15 yr – 2; 16 yr – 3; 17 yr – 3	
In school – 7	Out of school - 3
Students	

TBILISI	MAIN PROBLEMS
Participant 1	1. Education level 2. Employment 3. Financial shortage
Participant 2	1. Education problems 2. Employment 3. Financial arrangements
Participant 3	1. Illiteracy 2. Unemployment 3. Drugs
Participant 4	1. Illiteracy 2. Drugs 3. Unemployment
Participant 5	1. Education in schools should correspond with high schools' requirements 2. Advantages for all schoolchildren at cultural events 3. Children's rights should be protected, every child should have right to express their ideas
Participant 6	1. Employment of 15-18 age children and education 2. Conditions of schools 3. Significant difference between city and region
Participant 7	1. Illiteracy 2. Unemployment 3. Poverty
Participant 8	1. Employment 2. Improvement of conditions 3. Poverty
Participant 9	1. Education 2. Material problem
Participant 10	1. Giving possibility to all youth to satisfy elementary demands 2. Repairing schools for children so they have desire to study 3. Possibility for entertainment in spare time

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION RUSTAVI

Participants – 10	
Male – 6	Female - 4
Age group – 15 yr – 3; 16 yr – 2; 17 yr – 3; 18 yr – 2.	
In school – 4	Out of school - 3
Students –3	

RUSTAVI	MAIN PROBLEMS
Participant 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Equipment in schools</li> <li>2. Entertainment for youth for spending free time</li> <li>3. Elaboration of effective education system</li> </ol>
Participant 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stop reduction of math and language lessons at school</li> <li>2. Circumstances for children to study</li> <li>3. There should be a place in Rustavi, where youth can rest and receive information</li> </ol>
Participant 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elementary jobs and higher salaries</li> <li>2. Education</li> <li>3. Limit expansion of different nations in Georgia</li> </ol>
Participant 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Economics</li> <li>2. Unemployment</li> <li>3. Responsibility</li> <li>4. Professionalism</li> </ol>
Participant 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unemployment</li> <li>2. Education reform</li> <li>3. Low education level at schools</li> </ol>
Participant 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial problems</li> <li>2. Arrangement of spare time</li> <li>3. Emigration</li> </ol>
Participant 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employment</li> <li>2. Ethnic problems</li> <li>3. Imperfect education</li> </ol>
Participant 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unemployment</li> <li>2. Education</li> <li>3. Emigration</li> </ol>
Participant 9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unemployment</li> <li>2. Imperfect education</li> <li>3. Emigration</li> </ol>
Participant 10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unemployment</li> <li>2. Education</li> <li>3. Money</li> </ol>

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION KUTAISI

Participants – 13	
Male – 5	Female - 8
Age group – 14 yr – 2; 15 yr – 3; 16 yr – 2; 17 yr – 2 18 yr – 4.	
In school – 7	Out of school - 2
Students – 4	

KUTAISI	MAIN PROBLEMS
Participant 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Youth development</li> <li>2. Conflict resolution</li> <li>3. Financial problems</li> </ol>
Participant 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial problems</li> <li>2. Problem of education (low level)</li> <li>3. Drug abuse among youth</li> <li>4. Human rights</li> <li>5. Healthcare problems (access to the health services)</li> </ol>
Participant 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial problems</li> <li>2. Healthcare problems</li> <li>3. Problems of education (low level)</li> </ol>
Participant 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial problems</li> <li>2. Problems of education (reform is unclear)</li> <li>3. Inaccessibility of health services</li> <li>4. Violation of human rights</li> <li>5. Problem of emigration</li> </ol>
Participant 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial problems</li> <li>2. Not effective/wrong education system</li> <li>3. Healthcare related and social problems</li> <li>4. Family violence</li> <li>5. Lack of trust in society</li> <li>6. Pessimistic attitude (underestimation of personal abilities among youth)</li> </ol>
Participant 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial problems</li> <li>2. Education system</li> <li>3. Healthcare and social problems</li> <li>4. Family violence</li> <li>5. Drug abuse and alcoholism</li> </ol>
Participant 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Drug abuse</li> <li>2. Low level of education</li> <li>3. Financial problems</li> <li>4.</li> </ol>

<b>KUTAISI</b>	<b>MAIN PROBLEMS</b>
Participant 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Problem of low quality education</li><li>2. Economic hardship</li><li>3. Nihilism of youth towards patriotic affairs</li></ol>
Participant 9	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Problem of low quality education</li><li>2. Drug abuse</li></ol>
Participant 10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Financial problems</li><li>2. Low quality of education</li><li>3. Inaccessibility to health services</li><li>4. Violation of rights</li><li>5. Globalization</li><li>6. Promotion of alcoholism, smoking, drug abuse via TV (films, advertisements)</li></ol>
Participant 11	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Low quality of education</li><li>2. Financial problems</li><li>3. Lack of places for entertainment</li><li>4. Living conditions</li><li>5. Absence of modern technology (computer, internet)</li></ol>
Participant 12	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Improper method of upbringing of children (wrong values)</li><li>2. Low quality education</li><li>3. Drugs</li></ol>
Participant 13	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Low quality education</li><li>2. Inactivity (low motivation) and complexes among youth</li></ol>

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GORI

Participants – 10	
Male – 3	Female - 7
Age group – 14 yr – 1; 15 yr – 2; 16 yr – 3; 17 yr – 2 18 yr - 2	
In school – 6	Out of school - 2
Students –2	

GORI	MAIN PROBLEMS
Participant 1	1. Improvement of sport in Georgia 2. Employment 3. Socially vulnerable people
Participant 2	1. Employment of youth 2. Information needed on youth programs 3. Training of staff in education system
Participant 3	1. Employment 2. Increase of salaries 3. Socially vulnerable people
Participant 4	1. Employment of youth 2. Inaccessibility of education for many 3. Preparation for professions
Participant 5	1. Education system reforms 2. Employment 3. Entertainment
Participant 6	1. Employment 2. Low qualityof education 3. Entertainment
Participant 7	1. Employment of youth 2. Education problem 3. Informational vacuum
Participant 8	1. Employment 2. Education 3. Entertainment
Participant 9	1. Accessibility to good schools 2. Wasting of spare time 3. Youth life should not be in black and white
Participant 10	1. Corruption 2. Attitude of teachers to children 3. Poverty

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION BATUMI

Participants – 8	
Male – 5	Female - 3
Age group – 14 yr – 1; 15 yr – 2; 16 yr – 3; 17 yr – 2	
In school – 6	Out of school - 1
Students –1	

BATUMI	MAIN PROBLEMS
Participant 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No possibility to enjoy spare time (cinema, theatre)</li> <li>We have no stadiums, that's why sport is not developed in the country at all</li> <li>Unemployment of people, because there are no factories and industry</li> </ol>
Participant 2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no cinema in Batumi</li> <li>There are no laboratories in the schools for physics or chemistry. There is no basic things for school children (desk, chalk, etc)</li> <li>Electricity problems</li> <li>Condition of roads, which need major repair</li> </ol>
Participant 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no places of entertainment in Adjara, e.g. circus, cinema, computer centers (games)</li> <li>There is no demand for education and there is lack of discipline.</li> </ol>
Participant 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is necessary to open institutions which promote development of youth (cinema, circus, squares, etc)</li> <li>More attention should be paid to youth activities</li> </ol>
Participant 5	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Electricity problem should be solved</li> <li>Non existence of elementary entertainment places in the city</li> </ol>
Participant 6	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We, children, demand freedom of speech and peace</li> <li>Every child should be occupied</li> <li>We all should love each other and thus build our future</li> </ol>
Participant 7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children's rights should be protected</li> <li>More attention should be paid to education and freedom of speech</li> <li>More entertainment places should be created (cinema, circus).</li> </ol>
Participant 8	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no places of entertainment in Adjara, e.g. circus, cinema, computer centers (games)</li> <li>Child should receive proper education in childhood, so high priority should be given to education. Education of young generation of Georgia is the guaranty of a better future</li> <li>Problem of corruption should be solved</li> <li>Poverty</li> </ol>

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## ANNEX E

### FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

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#### **I. Introduction (Warm-up)**

1. Moderator is introducing herself and is explaining the objectives and goals of the research.
2. Moderator asks participants to introduce themselves (Name, age, # of the school/name of high school/ working place)

#### **II. Main Problems**

3. Which problems are representing the biggest concern from a youth point of view (Probe for the following: unemployment, access to the health services, use of free time, access to the educational institutions, etc. and ask participants to prioritize the problems);
4. Youth attitudes and way of thinking about how above mentioned problems can be resolved (are they optimistic or not);
5. From whom (person/institution) do the youth expect to receive help/assistance/support (expectations, level of trust)

#### **III. Access to the Education**

6. Do you plan to continue study after graduating the school? If no, why? If yes, why? Do you think school gives you enough knowledge that will be required for passing the entrance exams?
7. Where would you like to continue your studying? (Probe for the following: Tbilisi, Abroad, Native region). Why?

#### **IV. Employment**

8. What are undergraduates doing generally (most commonly)?
9. Where would you like to find a job after finishing your studying? (Probe for the following: Georgia/Tbilisi, Foreign Countries).
10. Do you know what are the possible risks of working abroad? (If yes) Please specify the risks?
11. Have you ever heard about trafficking? What do you know about it? What is the source of this information? Do you consider that trafficking is the real threat for the youth of Georgia? Why?
12. Do you know anyone personally who has had this experience?
13. What do you think is necessary/required for receiving a job in Georgia/abroad? Probe for the following: (money, protector, proper knowledge/skills)
14. What kind of job is commonly available for the youth in Georgia/Abroad?

15. For the Moderator: Ask questions to those participants who left school after ninth grade: Why did you prefer to leave the secondary school after ninth grade? Probe for the reasons: financial problems, lack of trust in future (education is not essential to find a job), etc.

**V. Availability of the Information**

16. What kind of sources of information is available for you?
17. What kind of sources of information do you prefer? Probe for the following: Internet, newspaper, TV, Radio, Library, and Brochures/leaflets. Why?
18. Which is the most reliable source? Why?
19. Which is the most effective? Why?

**VI. Youth attitudes and way of thinking regarding conflict resolution**

20. What is the best way to resolve the conflicts? Why do you think so?
21. What is your feeling about what you (youth) can do for conflict resolution?

**VII. Youth Activities**

22. Have you any desire to participate/be involved in the youth activities in your area? If yes, please specify in which areas.
23. Do you consider that your participation in the decision making process is important/essential? If yes, why? If no, why? (Probe for the reasons)
24. What is the most effective way of expressing your opinion publicly if you want to be heard by decision makers? (Probe for the following: Protest, Street meetings, Dialogue). Why do you think so?
25. Do you know about your rights? If yes, what is the source? Does it help? How? If no, have you ever tried to get information about it? What obstacles have you faced?
26. What is your role in the society and what can you do for your future?
27. Are you involved in the social life at your school/outside the school? (Probe for the following: Festivals, Competitions, other)

**VIII. Availability of the information about youth activities taking place at their area (NGOs/International Organizations/Local State Institutions)**

28. Are you informed about existing youth houses/clubs? Do you like them or not? What exactly do you know about their activities/success stories;
29. Level of awareness about youth activities taking place in their region/rayon/city: what do you know about youth activities taking place in your region/rayon/city? Do you know any NGO/state institution working in this direction? (If yes) What do you know?

**IX. Other (Military, Religious/Ethnic Minorities/Corruption)**

30. Attitude towards military service (Do male participants have a wish to go for military service or not)
31. Attitudes and relations with religious or ethnic minorities in their communities, and gender issues;
32. Where do you encounter corruption in your daily life?
33. What do you think should be done about corruption?
34. Where do you encounter corruption in your daily life?
35. What do you think should be done about corruption?
36. Do you vote or participate in local politics? If not, why not?

**X. Expectations from the Future**

37. What do you expect from the future (What is the most critical and what are the most important problems which they wish to be addressed by the government.)
38. Imagine that you are person who has enough power, authority and resources to resolve the problems but consider that you can resolve only one of the problems. Which problem would you like to resolve in this case?

**INTERVIEW METHODOLOGY**

In depth interviews will be conducted with one or two local representatives, at least one from the local government youth department and at least one from the local NGO sector. Each interview should not last more than 1 hour.

**Issues to be Investigated**

1. Existing activities for youth;
2. Are they informed about what (other) NGOs or international organizations are doing to help youth?
3. Ask about local NGO activities such as Young Parliamentarians
4. What do they consider to be the most pressing problems for youth?
5. What do they consider to be successful programs for youth and why, and do they have examples of programs that have not worked well?
6. What future programs are most necessary to help their youth locally and nationally?
7. Ask about local NGO activities such as Young Parliamentarians